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TOWARDS NEW HORIZONS

BY
PYARELAL




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TOWARDS NEW HORIZONS

By the same Author

THE EPIC FAST

STATUS OF INDIAN PRINCES

A PILGRIMAGE FOR PEACE

A NATION BUILDER AT WORK

GANDHIAN TECHNIQUES IN THE MODERN WORLD

MAHATMA GANDHI—THE LAST PHASE (IN TWO VOLUMES)

THE SANTINIKETAN PILGRIMAGE

TOWARDS NEW HORIZONS

[Reprint from *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase*]

by
PYARELAL



NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD

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FOREWORD

BY GIVING us *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase* in two volumes, Shri Pyarelal has rendered a unique service to the world that perhaps no one else could have done. I have compared the closing phase of Gandhiji's life to *Shanti Parva* (The Peace Canto) and *Svargarohana Parva* (The Canto of the Attainment of Elysian Bliss) of the *Mahabharata*. Shri Pyarelal's book, which I dare say will in the years to come rank as a classic, brings to us a vision of this modern epic.

This was the height of Gandhiji's career though to the world, for a moment, it seemed to be a period of his eclipse. His thought had attained its full maturity. As it added to itself more and more dimensions, the frail earthly tabernacle became, as it were, a fetter upon it. It had to break free from its shackles and become all-pervasive to help further evolution of the world's thought.

An epic is necessarily a voluminous affair — not within the reach of each and all. It has to be condensed and presented in its essence for the use of the common folk. After independence, Gandhiji's thoughts were turned more and more to the realisation of the full picture of Sarvodaya society in India. The three chapters in Shri Pyarelal's book setting forth this picture are now being brought out in the form of a separate book. I am writing this foreword to commend to the reader this publication in the hope that it will serve as a beacon-light to us.

The philosophy that Gandhiji presented to us through his written and spoken word and above all through his life, though essentially Indian in its origin and background, is destined to have a world-wide application. Satyagraha (the power of truth and non-violence), Sarvodaya (the doctrine of the good of all), Samanvaya (synthesis) and Samya-yoga (the gospel of equality) are its four facets. I have to the best of my capacity and understanding striven for the last ten years to give body to it in all its four aspects. In my own way, under Gandhiji's inspiration and guidance, I have been thinking and experimenting on these lines for the last forty years. That inspiration and guidance abide with me still. I take this opportunity in re-affirmation of my faith to pledge myself to my Maker to dedicate myself to the pursuit of this goal till my last breath.

I hold that Vedanta (unitive knowledge), Vijnan (science) and Vishvas (faith) are the three forces by which this four-fold consummation will be achieved.

Vedanta stands for liquidation of all sectarian and prescriptive religions and isms and their re-emergence into an all-embracing faith

in One God. Equal respect for all religions follows from it as a corollary.

Vijnan means relentless, systematic search for all the hidden forces in nature including not only the material world without but also the world of the spirit within. Enrichment of life and correct thinking are the fruits of Vijnan.

Vishvas or faith is the means that will liquidate the present group and party politics based on mutual distrust and establish in their place *Lokniti* or the people's democracy.

I have summed up the significance of these three forces in a Sanskrit couplet

वेदांतो विज्ञानं विश्वासश्चेति शक्तयस्तिस्रः ।

यासां स्थैर्ये नित्यं शांति-समृद्धी भविष्यतो जगति ॥

which means that Vedanta, Vijnan and Vishvas are the three forces which when fully and firmly established will inaugurate the era of perpetual peace and prosperity on earth.

SHAHADE,
4-9-1958

VINOBA

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR of this volume, in his impressive and moving study of *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase*, describes the sadness that came over his master and friend with the achievement of independence. For, paradoxically, with the long struggle ended, and India free to rule herself at last, the self-discipline of non-violence which Mr. Gandhi had taught and inculcated quickly began to sag, even among the leaders. Would not Gandhiji have been as disturbed and distressed to see his social philosophy — which in his teaching was the necessary foundation for non-violence, as for human development — pushed aside and discounted in the feverish drive for planned industrial development? And were these the failures of individuals with a faith less staunch than his, or just the usual paling of high ideals before the strains and stresses of ordinary life?

To Western minds the ideas and ways of Mr. Gandhi had always been a matter of much perplexity. As the years passed, and the consistency of his teaching and practice could not be denied, his particular vision and strength had to be admitted to have the measure of true greatness. It is not difficult, even for doubters, to allow that quality to a reformer who perches distantly on a pulpit and keeps well out of our way. But the last thing Mr. Gandhi wanted was to be looked upon as an unworldly saint. Indeed he gave no one, his political friends as little as his political opponents, a chance to do so. On every issue and on every occasion he stood firmly in their path, admonishing and demanding (not least forcefully through the retiring pressure of his fasts) that his ideals should be heeded and followed. To do so was no easy allegiance. For they were ideals with roots in the old passive society of the East, and nowhere seemed to fit the outlook and pursuits of the active type of society which the West had developed, and which the new East seemed only too eager to imitate.

That discord was vividly epitomised in an exchange of letters with Pandit Nehru, in 1945. Mr. Gandhi's vision of what an independent India should be was clear and consistent :

We can realise truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life. . . . The essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self-sufficient. . . .¹

Mr. Nehru replied (was it a trifle petulantly?):

I do not understand why a village should necessarily

1. See page 4.

embody truth and non-violence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment. Narrow-minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent....²

Though perfectly frank, Mr. Nehru's reply skirted round the central point of Mr. Gandhi's philosophy and programme. And so Mr. Gandhi came back in terms that were more concrete and could not possibly be misunderstood :

If we try to work out conditions for such a life we are forced to the conclusion that the unit of society should be a village or call it a manageable small group of people who would, in the ideal, be self-sufficient (in the matter of their vital requirements) as a unit and bound together in bonds of mutual co-operation and interdependence.³

Here the issue is nailed down in such a way as to leave no possible room for equivocation. It was an ideal of small, intimate local societies, as against the anonymous social amalgam of the modern industrialised society. Mr. Nehru's reply not only had skirted round that issue, but significantly had done so in terms that are habitual with those, whether academic economists or political propagandists, who speak for the urbanised and industrialised society of the West — particularly when he introduced the much used but nebulous idea of "progress".

Earlier periods of change had not been quite so boastful, but especially since the middle of the nineteenth century the term "progress" had been used freely, by Liberals and by Socialists alike, and had essentially been identified with improvements in the material conditions of life. There was plenty of need for such improvement. Poverty, ignorance, dirt and disease were often widespread; but they were especially widespread, and even shocking, in the crowded urban centres that had grown apace with the rise of modern factory production — the "dark, Satanic mills" of Blake's distressed vision. In a sense it would be true to say that ever since, social "progress" has had to step in and try to mend some of the damage done to Western society by economic "progress".

The mending is not finished, though much has been done finely and generously since the coming of the "welfare state". There is a fair chance, if only peace lasts, that serious material want will not be allowed again to crush anyone in the West. Who that has known the straits of poverty, in whatever form, could fail to give praise for such achievement? Was this not the goal which the West had set itself as the test of a good society? All the more is it disquieting,

2. See page 5.

3. See page 8.

therefore, to find that there are also threatening shadows to that "progress", and that in the very quarter which material improvement was intended and expected to make bright. Crime, to look at one of the new shadows, had long been assumed to ooze from poverty; yet the past years have seen a continuous rise in crime, especially in juvenile crime, which those with authority now attribute largely to the temptations which relative affluence is putting within the reach of young people.⁴ Still more perplexing is the discontent which ruffles continuously the mass of the workers — after years of steady rise in their standard of living, and in spite of the many new devices which now provide them with social security "from the cradle to the grave". Everywhere in the West one hears those responsible for the guidance of public life — statesmen and magistrates, churchmen and teachers — asking themselves in dismay: "What has gone wrong with our 'progress'? Where is the error in our social calculations and scheme of things?"

During the previous decades criticism of Western industrial society had run in the main along two strands. One was the Socialist strand, as a direct outgrowth of industrial development, skilfully expounded and widely followed. The other could be described broadly as the Populist or Peasantist strand, known only locally in the agrarian east of Europe and in the south of the United States, and scorned, if not ignored, by Western economists and social writers, and by Socialists even more than by Liberals. All the social transformation since 1917, the revolutionary Communist "people's democracy" and the evolutionary "welfare state", has issued from the first, the insistent and telling Socialist criticism of the evils of capitalist society. Over a large area and in a large, if varying, measure, that attack has won the day. Even in the United States there is now as much State property as private property, and as much State control as private initiative in the process of production; in Great Britain and the countries of Western Europe this has gone much farther.

That much is evident. But what, one may ask, is now as a consequence fundamentally different in the ways and nature of Western society? One change is obvious and devoutly to be welcomed,

4. In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, 10th November 1958, Mr. E. R. Woolley, a member for many years of the Liverpool C.I.D., wrote that in the inter-war period there was a continuous decline in crime after 1919, until in the 1930's "the figures were almost at their lowest—and this fall coincides with the rise in unemployment which culminated in the slump of the late 1920's and early 1930's". In recent years, on the other hand, "the steep rise in juvenile crime coincides with improving employment, improving housing and improving general social welfare — in fact an improvement in all those factors which were then regarded as being the prime causes of delinquency".

namely, the course has been set for levelling, by various means, especially through common social services, the material conditions of life. Under the prevailing democratic outlook, whatever is done by the State, or under its aegis, inevitably has to be done on equalitarian basis. For the rest, as regards particularly the organisation of production—which according to Marxist teaching determines the nature of social relations—and economic organization in general, the mark of the new shape of things is above all one of dimension, of concentrated bigness. In every respect, the Communist, Socialist or nationalised industrial system is made in the image of the despised capitalist system, but with a determined bent towards ever large units of production. The Soviet prototype makes a boast of its pre-eminence in such bigness. Indeed, the belief in mere size had become such a dogma in Marxist teaching that the Communist States have introduced it even in agriculture—a thing which the most aggressive capitalist had never dared to try, nor ever dreamt of trying.

It does not need any laborious inquisition to discover that the bigger the unit of production, the more corrosive is the effect on the human factor. The machine is put above the worker who gets, so to speak, increasingly de-personalised, in the factory as on the land. That is one of the few social equations which could be reliably expressed in a straight algebraic formula. And nowhere has it been reached with more frightening, if enforced, efficiency than in Communist China, where not only the individual but also the family, and all private and domestic life, are being swallowed up in the rapacious maw of the huge collectivised farms. In factory as on the land the individual qualities of the worker are thus pared down sharply through iron discipline, so as to bring him as close as possible to the mindless obedience of the machine.

At this point the contrast with the second strand of criticism becomes complete and unbridgeable. What the Populist—as it was known when dominant in Russia—or Peasantist movement condemned above all in modern Western development was this *mechanical* as against a *human* view of production, when production is no longer a means for the comfort of man, but man is increasingly looked upon as a means for the growth of production. The Populist view saw a happier promise in life on the land, above all it believed passionately in the virtues of small units of life and work, where the members of the community knew each other and helped each other, in co-operative sympathy. Starting from that fundamental creed the Peasant movement in Eastern Europe developed a finely conceived and balanced social philosophy and political programme. It was also truly democratic—it could indeed be nothing else, for its faith rested in the human personality not in

the gods of the machine — and it gradually came to dominate the political scene in the agrarian parts of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia included. There is great significance, therefore, in the fact that the main attack of the so-called “People’s Democracies” was — as had been the attack of the local Socialist parties before the war — directed against these Peasant parties and programmes, though in all those countries the peasants *were* the people; and in every case their allegiance was not turned by conversion but crushed by force.

Politically that was perhaps inevitable. For what the Peasant philosophy and movement represented was not, like the Marxist, a technique of production, but a *way of life*; and a way of life which would have stood in the way of all the Communist dreams of spectacular industrial increase and of consequent economic power. On the other hand, and very significantly, though the two currents matured independently of each other, the Peasantist strand was in all essentials very close to the philosophy and programme which Mr. Gandhi had evolved out of his own vision of a good life, and of a world at peace. Both were rooted in a true love for the human personality, and in a deep understanding of the shoals and rapids which threatened the peace of man in a competitive society. Both were *natural* philosophies, not “scientific” programmes. The exiled leader of the Croat Peasant Party, Dr. Macek, relates in his recent book how when the Party’s influence was at its strongest, in the late 1930’s, one of its intellectual members urged that need for a detailed and specific formulation of its social programme. “A lengthy discussion followed. Diverse views were expounded before a prominent peasant stood up and said, ‘Men, what do we need a programme for? Don’t you see that our programme is dictated by our everyday life?’”⁵

Here is a good example of that quiet, earthy wisdom which is to be found among peasants everywhere, with its springs in the hardwon experience of life, not in ideas lightly picked up from textbooks or newspapers or broadcasts. Perhaps the most revealing point in Mr. Nehru’s letter, quoted before, was the easy assumption that lack of schooling and college degrees meant implicitly ignorance and backwardness and even narrow-mindedness (and that after we had experienced what the fanatical Nazis could do with perhaps the most “schooled” nation in the world!). The view is rather typical of complacent intellectuals in the West, but it came surprisingly from a distinguished mind still in touch with a vast population of peasants. He might have remembered the saying of Montesquieu, no mean judge of human character, “I much prefer to talk with a peasant, he is not learned enough to be capable of arriving at a wrong conclusion”. And I could have told

5. Dr. Vladko Macek, *In the Struggle for Freedom*, New York, 1957, page 171.

him of my own fairly recent experience, when a bright young American student, having lost his way among the hills above New York, and unable to get information out of a taciturn local landman, told the man impatiently that he did not seem to know much, to which the man replied quietly : "No, I don't, but I am not lost!".

Does not that simple but unwittingly profound exclamation epitomise the strange present state of the West? We have acquired fantastic scientific knowledge and vast technical skills, to such a degree that we are not far perhaps from being able to control all physical nature at will. Yet at the same time we seem to be losing that understanding of human nature which shone in the thinkers and leaders of old. At any rate, the most thoughtful and sensitive minds in the West are now greatly disturbed and baffled by the drift of things (I am speaking of the West, for the rulers of Communist States are so self-confident and so engrossed in their material schemes that they are not even troubled by such human questions and doubts). The new and seemingly "progressive" order of society gives the *worker* relative affluence, and he loses his self-reliance and his sense of personal responsibility. It gives him many gifts, and every gift becomes a shackle. For the State, which is the chief dispenser, is more impersonal and unapproachable, more insensitive to individual pains and needs, than even a selfish employer or landlord could afford to be in the past.

It will be said that the economic philosophy of Mr. Gandhi is now difficult to apply where the population has grown excessively, and its needs beyond what human hands alone and the soil can produce. Yet Mr. Gandhi's thought may still be valid and desirable wherever possible, as a programme. And as philosophy, it is more valid than ever. The proof is in the restless uneasiness of the West in a time of new and growing material prosperity, even among the best paid and best fed of workers. And yet that very restlessness, that discontent in the midst of plenty, may be, as I believe it to be, a very sign of grace. It suggests that the human personality insists on breaking through even through the luscious crust of level and freely provided comfort. And if this reading of the signs be true, then the greater the present suppression of the human personality in the frantic search for "production", the more violent and irresistible will be its eventual revolt—a revolt not for the benefit of "capitalists" or "imperialists", but for the rescue of the simple, eternal human values from the suffocating solicitude of the planned benevolent State.

OXFORD,
14th November 1958.

DAVID MITRANY

PREFACE

WHILE THE second volume of *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase* was in the press, it was suggested to me that three chapters in that volume, viz. Chapters 21, 22 and 25 should be brought out separately for wider circulation. I readily agreed.

The first two chapters, namely “Towards New Horizons” and “Setting Democracy on the March” contain Gandhiji’s mature views on the economic set-up and the functioning of democracy in free India. They also give an indication of the plans that were forming in his mind in his last days and the orientation he tried to give to our national activities for the realisation of the Sarvodaya ideal, for which independence had cleared the way. The third chapter, “Epilogue”, contains his final answer in terms of soul force to the problem posed by the threat of nuclear destruction and the equations in which he tried to express the fundamental laws governing that force. All these questions are very much with us today — perhaps even more than they were when Gandhiji was in our midst in the flesh. The solutions that he worked out have a validity not only for us but for the world.

A people is judged by the way it honours its heroes. I cannot do better than to reproduce here what I wrote in the “Preface” to the second volume of *The Last Phase*:

“Gandhiji disliked heartily being placed on what he used sardonically to call the ‘icy heights of the Himalayas’, to be worshipped from afar, admired from a distance, but not to be followed or lived with. He was not in the habit of indulging in abstract thinking. His was essentially a philosophy in action. It becomes a meaningless fetish to pay homage to the personality of such a man leaving out his practice. To treat Gandhiji’s economic, social and political outlook and activities as a matter of mere detail, to dismiss them as something ephemeral that has ceased to have any validity for us after the attainment of independence, is to make nonsense of all that he wore his soul out to realise. His economic, political and social activities were an expression and an integral part of what was fundamental in him. One cannot accept the one and reject the other.

“He left no doubt as to what he wanted India to realise, and through India the world. To the last he continued to proclaim his faith in Khadi and Charkha, manual crafts, the village way of life, and the values these stand for, in short the ideal of

Sarvodaya — “unto this last” — i.e. denying oneself what could not be shared with the least, and his distrust of much of what today we pride ourselves in as ‘progress’. A few months before his death, he declared that he would continue to proclaim his faith and speak to us even from the grave. We, therefore, owe it to him and to ourselves to understand what it was that he wanted to speak about even from the grave.

“Some of his forebodings recorded in these pages have already materialised. The ruinous race for armaments between India and Pakistan; exploitation of Indo-Pak tension by the power blocs; the abortive attempt in our country to go back on the abolition of the salt tax and on prohibition; continuation of the evil practice of filling Government coffers by revenue from betting and gambling on race-tracks . . . the danger more and more of the voice of the people being drowned by the noise of the ‘pundits’ in the planning of the people’s lives; and last but not least the steady attempt to make India military-minded symbolised by the crowning irony of the official annual ceremony with arms at Rajghat on the 30th January to pay homage to the Apostle of Peace — all these have become stark realities. We must know and understand what further lies at the end of this road. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.”

To fill in some vital gaps, I have included in this book Gandhiji’s picture of an ideal society (Appendix C) from the first volume of *The Last Phase*, and his views on Socialism and Marxism from the second volume (Appendix D). Two Appendices referred to on pages 69, 138 and 178 of this book, viz. “Armed Invasion and Non-violent Resistance” and “The Last Will and Testament”, though originally not intended to be incorporated in this volume have now been incorporated and will be found reproduced at the end as Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

On page 23, the reader is requested to read “Griscom Morgan” for “Eric Morgan”, and to substitute for Gandhiji’s quotation in the penultimate para on page 39, the following : “The British want to put the struggle on the plane of machine guns. They have weapons and we have not. Our only assurance of beating them is to keep it on the plane where we have the weapons and they have not.”

My thanks are due to Vinobaji for his “Foreword”, and to Dr. David Mitrany for his scholarly “Introduction”.

NEW DELHI
December 16, 1958

PYARELAL

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TOWARDS NEW HORIZONS

TOWARDS NEW HORIZONS

1

INDIA WAS now independent. But in Gandhiji's eyes political independence had little value if it did not herald the era of the common man. It would give him no satisfaction, he had often said, to substitute "King Stork for King Log". The struggle for political independence to him was not the end; it was only the first step towards the emancipation of the masses. He had been working to that end even when the country was in the wilderness.

"When would India be said to have attained complete independence?" Gandhiji was once asked during his last detention at Poona. He replied: "When the masses feel that they can improve their lot by their own effort and can shape their destiny the way they like." "Can full accession of power to the masses come through constitutional transfer of power; would not gradualism choke the upsurge of mass consciousness, continuity kill the prospect of a revolutionary change?" he was again asked. "Not if the transfer of power is peaceful," he replied, "and the masses hold on to non-violence to the last."

The communal blood-bath preceding and following independence had, however, queered the pitch. Seeing the goings-on around him, especially since independence, he sometimes asked himself whether independence had not come too early and too late. If there had been more time for the foundations of the constructive work to be deepened, and for the reorientation he had sought to give to it on his release from detention thirty-six months earlier an opportunity to work itself out, it could have started the country on the desired road. The people would have taken care of it themselves afterwards and held their own even against odds. Similarly, if independence had come much earlier, the communal blood-bath, which nearly submerged independence, would most probably have been avoided and in the environment of peace and non-violence the masses would have got a sporting chance to come into their own. The thought depressed him. But he continued to nurse the hope that as soon as the country had a breathing spell, he would be able to return to his unfinished task. Ever since his release in 1944, he had been having exploratory talks with the Congress leaders in this behalf.

"I want to write about the difference of outlook between us," he wrote to Pandit Nehru in one of his letters in the first week of October, 1945. "If the difference is fundamental then . . . the public should be . . . made aware of it. It would be detrimental to our work for Swaraj . . . to keep them in the dark."

The occasion was a discussion in the Working Committee on the social and economic objectives of the Congress after independence. Differences in outlook in regard to these there had been among the members even before, but they had hitherto largely been on the academic plane. In action Gandhiji's programme alone held. The realities of the freedom struggle admitted of no other alternative. With freedom round the corner, a re-examination of the fundamental position became a matter of supreme necessity.

At the end of the Working Committee meeting, it was decided that the question should again be taken up in a two or three-day session of the Committee and the position finally clarified. "But whether the Working Committee sits or not," wrote Gandhiji to Pandit Nehru, "I want our position *vis-a-vis* each other to be clearly understood by us. . . . The bond that unites us is not only political. . . . It is immeasurably deeper and . . . unbreakable. Therefore . . . I earnestly desire that in the political field also we should understand each other clearly. . . . We both live for the cause of India's freedom and we would both gladly die for it. . . . Whether we get praise or blame is immaterial to us. . . . I am now an old man. . . . *I have, therefore, named you as my heir. I must, however, understand my heir and my heir should understand me. Then alone shall I be content.*" (Italics mine). Gandhiji's letter continued:

I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognised that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to both violence and untruth.

I hold that without truth and non-violence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realise truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and this simplicity can best be found in the Charkha and all that the Charkha connotes. I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way. It may be that India too will go that way and like the proverbial moth burn itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more and more fiercely. But it is my bounden duty up to my last breath to try to protect India and through India the entire world from such a doom.

The essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self-sufficient. If he

does not have this control, he cannot save himself. After all, the world is made up of individuals just as it is the drops that constitute the ocean. . . . This is a well-known truth. . . .

While I admire modern science, I find that it is the old looked at in the true light of modern science which should be reclothed and refashioned aright. You must not imagine that I am envisaging our village life as it is today. The village of my dreams is still in my mind. After all, every man lives in the world of his dreams. My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague, nor cholera, nor small-pox; no-one will be idle, no-one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour. . . . It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraph . . . and the like. . . .

Pandit Nehru wrote back:

The question before us is not one of truth versus untruth or non-violence versus violence. One assumes, as one must, that true cooperation and peaceful methods must be aimed at and a society which encourages these must be our objective. The whole question is how to achieve this society and what its content should be. I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and non-violence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment. Narrow-minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent. . . .

We have to put down certain objectives like a sufficiency of food, clothing, housing, education, sanitation etc. which should be the minimum requirements for the country and for everyone. It is with these objectives in view that we must find out specifically how to attain them speedily. Again it seems to me inevitable that modern means of transport as well as many other modern developments must continue and be developed. There is no way out of it except to have them. If that is so, inevitably a measure of heavy industry exists. How far that will fit in with a purely village society? Personally I hope that heavy or light industries should all be decentralised as far as possible and this is feasible now because of the development of electric power. If two types of economy exist in the country there would be either conflict between the two or one will overwhelm the other.

The question of independence and protection from foreign aggression, both political and economic, has also to be considered

in this context. I do not think it is possible for India to be really independent unless she is a technically advanced country. I am not thinking for the moment in terms of just armies but rather of scientific growth. In the present context of the world, we cannot even advance culturally without a strong background of scientific research in every department. There is today in the world a tremendous acquisitive tendency both in individuals and groups and nations, which leads to conflicts and wars. Our entire society is based on this more or less. That basis must go and be transformed into one of cooperation, not of isolation which is impossible. If this is admitted and is found feasible then attempts should be made to realise it not in terms of an economy which is cut off from the rest of the world but rather one which cooperates. From the economic or political point of view an isolated India may well be a kind of vacuum which increases the acquisitive tendencies of others and thus creates conflicts.

There is no question of palaces for millions of people. But there seems to be no reason why millions should not have comfortable up-to-date homes where they can lead a cultured existence. Many of the present overgrown cities have developed evils which are deplorable. Probably we have to discourage this overgrowth and at the same time encourage the village to approximate more to the culture of the town. . . .

How far it is desirable for the Congress to consider these fundamental questions, involving varying philosophies of life, it is for you to judge. I should imagine that a body like the Congress should not lose itself in arguments over such matters which can only produce greater confusion in people's minds resulting in inability to act in the present. This may also result in creating barriers between the Congress and others in the country. Ultimately of course this and other questions will have to be decided by representatives of free India. I have a feeling that most of these questions are thought of and discussed in terms of long ago, ignoring the vast changes that have taken place all over the world during the last generation or more. . . . The world has completely changed since then, possibly in a wrong direction. In any event any consideration of these questions must keep present facts, forces and the human material we have today in view, otherwise it will be divorced from reality.

Pandit Nehru's letter characteristically ended on a note of last minute indecision and self-doubt — the hall-mark of his integrity and transparent sincerity. Instead of removing the question mark he had set out to remove, he ended up by adding one more of his own: "You are right in saying that the world, or a large part of it, appears

to be bent on committing suicide. That may be an inevitable development of an evil seed in civilisation that has grown. I think it is so. How to get rid of this evil, and yet how to keep the good in the present as in the past is our problem. Obviously there is good too in the present."

In their next meeting a month later, Gandhiji returned to the charge. The main premises of Pandit Nehru's letter, he pointed out, were common ground between them. In fact he could not agree with them more. They were, ensuring a parity between urban and rural standards of living, speedy attainment of "a sufficiency of food, clothing, housing, education, sanitation" etc. which should be the "minimum requirements for the country and for everyone", "true cooperation and peaceful methods" and "a society which encourages these" as being the objective to be aimed at, and finally the necessity of keeping in view "present facts, forces and the human material we have today" in any consideration of "these questions". But these, if worked out to their logical conclusion, led not to Pandit Nehru's picture or his way of achieving it but his own:

Our talk of yesterday made me glad. I am sorry we could not prolong it further. I feel it cannot be finished in a single sitting but will necessitate frequent meetings on our part. I am so constituted that if only I were physically fit to run about, I would myself overtake you, wherever you might be, and return after a couple of days' heart-to-heart talk with you. I have done so before. It is necessary we should understand each other well and that others also should clearly understand where we stand. It would not matter if ultimately we might have to agree to differ so long as we remained one at heart, as we are today. The impression that I have gathered from our yesterday's talk is that there is not much difference in our outlook. To test this I put down below the gist of what I have understood. Please correct me if there is any discrepancy.

1. The real question, according to you, is how to bring about man's highest intellectual, economic, political and moral development. I agree entirely.
2. In this there should be an equal right and opportunity for all.
3. In other words, there should be equality between the town-dwellers and villagers in the standard of food and drink, clothing and other living conditions. In order to realise this equality today people should be able to produce their own necessities of life, i.e. clothing, foodstuffs, dwellings and lighting and water.

4. Man is not born to live in isolation but is essentially a social animal independent and interdependent. No-one can or should ride on another's back. If we try to work out necessary conditions for such a life, we are forced to the conclusion that the unit of society should be a village or call it a manageable small group of people who would, in the ideal, be self-sufficient (in the matter of their vital requirements) as a unit and bound together in bonds of mutual cooperation and interdependence.

If I find that so far I have understood you correctly, I shall take up consideration of the second part of the question in my next.

The discussion, thereafter, however, could not be resumed owing to quick political changes and later due to outbreak of communal disorders. The issue came to a head only in the later part of 1947, after independence. Even then it could not be carried to a conclusion. It is, however, possible and it would be worthwhile to reconstruct from Gandhiji's writings, in rough outline, his unfinished argument and to examine its implications in the context of the present-day world.

2

The divergent interests of town and country, industry and agriculture have been a perennial issue since the rise of modern industry. Occasionally in the course of social and political struggles, the two sections have joined hands but the union proved to be only temporary. As soon as the common objective was achieved, the chronic antagonism between town and country asserted itself in an even acuter form.

The evil of economic and political control by one country over another for the exploitation of its raw materials, cheap labour and markets has been given its proper name, and colonialism finds very few apologists these days. The colonial system is, however, still practised in its essence by countries aspiring to effect a quick entry into the modern era *vis-a-vis* their own rural population, when industry imposes manufactured goods on the villages in quantity and at the price it desires and makes them produce raw materials in the quantity and at the price the industrialist wants. But nobody thinks anything of it. On the contrary, it is justified and even glorified in the name of "progress", "national prosperity", and so on. "Force connected with great industry," observes Gina Lombroso, "permits the consideration of all the non-industrial countries and classes — and therefore weaker — as conquered countries and classes."¹

In industry increasing production as a rule means diminishing costs. Agriculture is, however, so constituted that it can meet increasing demands on it only by trading soil fertility. To obtain cheap raw materials for which machine production has created an insatiable demand and food and other means of subsistence without which the non-producing industrial population cannot go on, therefore, the farmer is made by various forms of subtle manipulation and coercion to produce industrial crops to the detriment of that which he needs for his own healthy subsistence. Real earnings from exhausted soil have consequently to be supplemented with "agricultural subsidies, bribes and price manipulation", and to keep the rural population contented "doppage" is resorted to in the form of cheap, factory-produced goods, luxury articles, movies, radio, automobiles and gadgets; and multiplication of roads and railways which the village could, in a large part, very well do without but which subserve the ends of industry. They hypnotise the villager so that he comes to regard them as the *sine qua non* of progress and becomes a willing instrument in his own exploitation.

Economic and social control would, under planned economy, it was at one time hoped, resolve the conflict, as in theory at least it could, and bring about a synthesis of the "field, factory and the workshop". But in practice the control, in the words of Dr. Mitrany, "has been exercised consistently" to the disadvantage of the rural community. In the result, the wide gulf between the two sections still remains unbridged. "Each is still resentful if supplies from the other fall short, or if the cost in terms of its own effort seems to place it . . . at a disadvantage."²

The attitude of the town-bred intellectual towards the peasant way of life is one of condescension and patronage when it is not of contempt. Gandhiji, unlike the elite, did not despise the peasant way of life which was to be made endurable by doling out "urban amenities" to the villages. Nor was the peasant in his eyes the foolish incurable reactionary of the Socialist philosophy, "at his best . . . a rural worker, at his worst . . . one who but wins a subsistence from the soil irrespective of any rights or needs of others to the soil and its productions,"³ who had to be written off in his own interest as well as in the interest of society. On the contrary, he was the salt of the earth, the sheet-anchor of democracy. "In the case of the Indian villager, an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. . . . Behind the crude exterior, you will find a deep reservoir of spirituality. . . . You will not find such a thing in the West. . . . Take away the encrustation, remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy, and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be."⁴

Everybody admits in theory that since India lives in her villages, the village must be the State's first and foremost concern. But when

it comes to the abolition of privileges, possessed by the towns at the cost of the villager, and its inescapable corollary that public money should be spent on the villages in the same proportion in which it was collected from the villages, even the most well-intentioned wobble and take refuge in sophistries and plausible excuses which the philosophy of "progress" readily provides.

Gandhiji was forthright: "The cities with their insolent torts are a constant menace to the life and liberty of the villagers."⁵ "If the cities want to demonstrate that their populations will live for the villagers of India, the bulk of their resources should be spent in ameliorating the condition of . . . the poor."⁶ And again: "Villagers are being exploited and drained by the cities. . . . Under my scheme, nothing will be allowed to be produced by the cities which can be equally well produced by the villages. The proper function of cities is to serve as clearing houses for village products. . . . The villages must become self-sufficient. I see no other solution if one has to work in terms of Ahimsa."⁷

The peasant way of life has its own compensations and value in the strategy of survival. In the words of Miriam Beard, the author of *History of the Business Man*, "Men suffered on the land but survived; while in the cities they flourished—and faded." There is an unhurried wisdom and contentment in nature which is reflected in the life of the peasantry. This is sometimes mistaken for slowness and stupidity. The traditional peasant way of life gives to the peasant a security which is the aspiration of industrial masses even in the advanced countries of the West. What insurance against unemployment, sickness, want and old age etc. are calculated to give to the worker, it has been pointed out, the peasant has always found in his traditional economy. It may not bring him such "material benefits as those . . . given in the West by the State, but it is a security which he can achieve with his own hands and which leaves him free to stand on his own feet."⁸

The reciprocal relationship between frustration and aggression, both in the individual and in society, is well known. Combative instinct is inherent in man. It cannot be eradicated. It can only be transmuted. In the case of the peasant, close partnership with Mother Earth gives to him an ingrained sense of security which he can achieve by his own effort. His "innate combative instinct" is discharged in his daily struggle with nature. The peasant is, therefore, not by nature aggressive. The same holds good in respect of the handicraftsman. His combative instinct finds expression in creative work and so he lacks the desire to give expression to his destructive impulses.

The absence of this converts the factory worker, uprooted from his environment and living in an atmosphere of regimentation and mass psychology and under the constant fear of unemployment and

industrial instability due to causes over which he has no control, into an individual who, in the words of Jung, is "unstable, insecure, and suggestible."⁹ Frustration leads to neurosis. He provides ready material which dictators and war-mongers exploit for their own ends.

True, the peasant also is exposed to the vagaries of the weather etc. But he can battle against them by his industry, intelligence and skill. In the final resort, he can fall back upon supplementary occupations to eke out a living. He does not feel frustrated. A community of peasant-craftsmen, is therefore naturally predisposed for peace. "There is no regime," observes Professor Seignobes, "more pacific than a democracy of peasant proprietors. Since the world began, no such community has ever desired or prepared or commenced a war."

But the peasant, while he is by nature not aggressive, is the most formidable fighter for individual freedom. "The growers of food are the last stronghold of freedom." In the words of Wilfred Wellock, "The peasant wields a weapon that is more powerful than . . . votes. He may not be able to use eloquent language, but he can live when the rest of us must die."¹⁰

Participation in the processes of nature whose pace, he has learnt from experience, cannot be forced, endows the peasant with "a stability and steadiness in his beliefs" and the qualities of patience, doggedness and perseverance which make him "invincible when engaged in political struggle."¹¹ "The peasant's power," as Dr. Mitrany has put it, "lies not in action but in resistance."¹² He is the greatest passive resister in all history, wrote Tiltman, another authority on the subject. Jefferson identified family farming with democracy.

A social order founded upon vigorous communities of peasant-craftsmen, Gandhiji held, would prove a veritable bulwark of democratic freedom, and provide a natural guarantee against any aggressive or expansionist tendency on India's part. It would be a tremendous asset to world peace.

3

The salient features of Gandhiji's system of economy are: (1) intensive, small-scale, individual, diversified farming supported by cooperative effort as opposed to mechanised, large-scale or collective farming; (2) development of cottage crafts as ancillary to agriculture; (3) cattle-based economy with strict enforcement of the "law of return" viz. to return to the soil in organic form what is taken out of the soil; (4) proper balance of animal, human and plant life, their relationship being symbiotic, i.e. one of mutually beneficial association; and (5) voluntary protection of both human and animal power against

the competition of machinery as the price of social insurance.

This has sometimes been dubbed by high-brow critics as “unprogressive, pre-scientific, mediaevalism”, a reversion to the “cow-dung era” and “bullock-cart mentality”. The fact of the matter is that Gandhiji was, if anything, ahead of his time. Being, however, essentially a man of action and an original thinker, he deliberately chose to clothe his ideas in the simple language of the masses through whom he had to work his revolution instead of using the current scientific jargon to express them.

Recent advances in agronomy have caused an increasing emphasis to be laid on the law of return. The one inexorable condition on which man is permitted to hold dominion over nature is that he leaves his environment better than he found it. Any infraction of this rule is visited by nature’s rough and ready justice. Helped by science man has been turning soil-capital into riches at such a rate as to endanger the future of civilisation itself. Sound businesses, one need not be reminded, are not run by paying dividends out of the capital.

There is a close economic and biological linkage running through nature. Plants and animals together with the micro-organisms in the soil form one community. They draw their sustenance from the soil and return to it what they have derived from it, when they die. As some plants and some animals require more of the one element than another, vegetable and animal species associate together in mutually complementary groups. The cattle serve as “rough transformers”. They convert rough vegetation into food fit for man. Besides, they enrich the soil by their droppings. The elements of life pass from the soil into the bodies of animals and plants and transmigrate from one form of life into another. This is often called “the nitrogen cycle”. The elements are kept constantly in circulation. This partnership is what is known as “symbiosis”—the process that keeps the life’s cycle going.

In addition to the economic and the biological, there is another aspect of man’s being that enters into relationships with nature, namely, the spiritual. When the balance between the spiritual and the material is disturbed, sickness results.

“Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need but not for every man’s greed,” said Gandhiji. So long as we cooperate with the cycle of life, the soil renews its fertility indefinitely and provides health, recreation, sustenance and peace to those who depend on it. But when the “predatory” attitude prevails, nature’s balance is upset and there is an all-round biological deterioration. Upon a proper relationship and balance between man and animal and animal and plant life, therefore, depends the health of the soil and of society. The health of man, animal and plant depends upon that of the soil, “the healthily-fed soil transfers health to the plant, the plant transfers

health to animal and man, and man, by his wise agriculture, transfers it back to the soil. This is the 'Wheel of Health'."¹³

The soil is not merely inert matter. It is a living laboratory where the process of the renewal of life by the interaction of living organisms and organic matter is constantly at work. The notion that fertility is merely a matter of N K P supply—supply of nitrogen, potash and phosphorus—in large enough quantities and can always be renewed by applying large doses of chemical fertilisers to the soil no longer holds. Soil structure, soil life and soil stability all have a close bearing on soil fertility. Sound soil structure is largely a result of the amount of humus and micro-life in the soil. Most serious consequences to the soil are known to result from the loss of the porosity or sponginess of the soil due to lack of humus which decayed animal and plant-remains provide.

Apart from the food for plants and the humus which decayed vegetation and animal-remains provide, the living vegetation provides a protective covering to the soil that shields it from the erosive action of wind and rain. Improvident denudation of forests for the exploitation of their timber wealth to meet the demands of "modern living",¹⁴ or for reclamation of land; over-grazing and raising of live-stock for trade; and indiscriminate use of mechanical tractors denude the soil of this covering.¹⁵ Deep ploughing tears up the matted grass-roots and turns them back into the soil where they serve as green manure. It gives bumper crops to begin with followed usually by a rapid decline. Absence of protective covering for the soil or of the grass-roots to bind the soil together accentuates erosion and adversely affects the water-holding capacity of the sub-soil on which more than on the total rainfall, the productivity of the soil depends. More and more of rainfall runs off the soil and is wasted. It is not unusual for "run-off" in this way to increase from the normal 1-2 per cent. to 10-20 per cent. i.e. ten times in the course of a few years. It affects, too, humidity and rainfall and temperature of the soil—in short, climate. Even when meteorological records show no appreciable change, the climate in effect progressively deteriorates. "Light rains become useless, heavy rains destructive, normal winds have the effect of tornadoes."¹⁶

Once the forest or the vegetation covering of the soil is destroyed, no engineering skill in the world can, except in a small and temporary way, control the fury of the rivers in spate or the destructive action of wind and rain that sweep over the unprotected soil. Millions of tons of top soil may thus be blown away by dust storms in a matter of days, ruining thousands of acres of land at the site of erosion. Where the dust settles down all vegetation is choked and the same process is set going over again. Rivers run amok; in the place of their even, crystal-clear flow, we have turbulent torrents of muddy

water, intermittent in their character; river-beds become raised on account of silting; inland navigation is impaired, floods become more frequent and progressively worse with every attempt to confine them by putting up river embankments; storage reservoirs for flood-control, for hydro-electric purposes, or for public water-supplies become silted up behind their dams and are rendered useless with incredible rapidity;¹⁷ springs, wells and tanks dry up in summer. What was a picture of idyllic loveliness is turned into a desolate waste. The ethical pattern of man's behaviour thus stamps itself not only on his social environment but has a decisive influence on nature itself.

An essential characteristic of true farming is that "it is not a business, it is a way of life." In the words of Lord Northbourne, "Farming is a part of man and man a part of farming." It becomes "rape of the soil" when the soil is used as means to becoming wealthy by converting it into cash.

Formerly, when agriculture was a mode of life, not only the farmer but also the urban community was vitally interested in the yield from the soil year after year. But today if yield from the land dwindles, owing to soil exhaustion or any other cause, the townsman scarcely bothers about it as long as enough food supplies can be had cheaply from elsewhere. It matters little to him if to meet the need of the industrial proletariat the soil of one country after another is ruined. There is always still some other source to draw upon. Increased facilities for transportation and for food preservation have created an irresistible temptation to barter soil fertility for money like any other commodity, and severed the biological link between civilisation and the soil. This "highly profitable despoliation" of the soil by commerce and industry has made certain nations exceedingly rich financially but impoverished the earth.

When the "demands of an expanding civilisation" exceed the recuperative capacity of the soil, erosion sets in. Erosion is essentially the "symptom of maladjustment between human society and its environment."¹⁸ Climate alone is never its cause but man's ignorance and more than that, man's greed. Edward Hyams, the well-known authority on agronomy, has vividly described the consequences of misapplied science joined to an exploitative economy thus:

The capitalist, with a whacking great dividend in mind, and the Marxist, with a factory population to feed . . . are blissfully ignorant or criminally indifferent to the fact that their "scientist" is sloppily inefficient and wasteful; for, instead of using the natural cycle cleverly to exploit plant life which constantly remakes its own nutrients in humus, he first of all exhausts the existing humus and then has to build and operate huge factories to make artificial fertilisers and distribute them, at enormous expense. The

agricultural industrialist, seeing that trees fetch money for wood pulp . . . cuts them down. . . . The soil might have been all right, even without trees, but the agricultural industrialist . . . has noticed that the paper cost of cultivating a million acres of wheat and a million acres of cotton in single blocks, is less than that of the 10,000 mixed farms. . . . So he has been drawing on one set of nutrients year after year, pouring in millions of tons of expensive artificial fertilisers because he no longer has a live soil but dead dust . . . which the first wind blows off the naked rock and into the sea. . . . Thereupon the Marxist, if he is inside the U.S.S.R. . . . plants forests and grass and prepares to wait for nature to restore the cycle; the capitalist says: "What the hell? There's always Amazonia when we've used up our own." . . . It's such an old story. First, the rich Yellow Earth of China ruined by the imposition of urban values; then the even richer tropical soil of Sind reduced to a barren desert by the great city populations of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro . . . and so following, until the destruction, in less than fifty years, of the great fertile plains of the Middle West, by American capitalist greed and indiscipline; and the lasting shame of the Dust Bowl. Because of the industrialist, the anti-peasant, *man has become a noxious disease organism of life on Earth.*¹⁹

Subsistence farming is essentially diversified farming; it is conservation farming. When farming is taken up as a way of life, the farmer is careful not to extract more out of the soil than is warranted by the power of the soil to recuperate and he omits no skill that human ingenuity stimulated by self-interest has devised to conserve its fertility. He knows that his family has to draw subsistence from it from year to year and from generation to generation. He cannot afford to let its fertility be impaired. But when land is worked for riches—to produce money crops without respite, or food or live-stock for export to meet the requirements of non-producing urban industrial proletariats, its fertility is exported with the farm produce.²⁰

The loss is sought to be made up by the use of artificial fertilisers. But food grown in the absence of natural humus, is found to be deficient in certain life sustaining principles though it may look fine. There may be bumper crops of wheat with fine, large grain, and fruits and vegetables of prize-size that are the pride of horticultural shows and exhibitions but unlike the products grown on a soil rich in humus with the help of organic manure, when fed to animals they produce malnutrition symptoms. McCarrison in his memo submitted to the Royal Commission on Agriculture testified:

They (plants as well as animals) cannot thrive, nor their

seed attain to the fullest "reproductive quality" unless they be provided, in addition to the mineral constituents of their food, with certain organic substance known as "auximones". These substances are as essential to the normal metabolism of plants as vitamins are to the normal metabolism of men and animals. They not only make the plant to build up from the simple ingredients derived from the soil those organic complexes required as food by men and animals but they enable it to elaborate vitamins without which the organic complexes cannot be properly utilised by the animal organism. Auximones are provided in the soil from decaying organic matter by the action of certain soil bacteria, and the best organic manure for this purpose is farmyard manure.²¹

Health is a matter not only of right food but food that is grown from healthy soil.²²

As for the imported food, it must in the first instance be processed, i.e. rendered inert, to prevent change taking place during transit and storage. It becomes devitalised.²³ The result in either case is malnutrition for the population that subsists on it. Malnutrition these days is rarely a "quantitative phenomenon". Consumption of devitalised food leaves the individual dissatisfied even when the stomach is full.²⁴ Being dissatisfied, he over-eats. In the end the power of assimilation fails, the taste deteriorates. When that happens, even food that is good is either wasted or rendered unacceptable. "Quality of the products of the soil," observes Lord Northbourne, "depends on the directness of man's relation to the soil, and on that relation being symbiotic, not predatory; that is, on the nutrition cycle being unbroken."²⁵

It is scarcely realised how high the incidence of malnutrition can run even in a highly prosperous and abundantly fed country where wrong agricultural practices prevail. Even in the United States, the late President Roosevelt disclosed, "one-third of the nation did not get enough protective foods."²⁶ "Doctors . . . know," writes Gilbert C. Wilson in "Chemurgic Uses for Old and New Crops", "that . . . many sick people are just hungry people with full stomachs. . . . The relationship between poor, eroded, mineral-deficient soils and the sickly, anaemic people that exist on them should be obvious even to the casual observer."²⁷ The Selective Service Administration in the U.S.A. found that whereas in some areas, where the fertility of the land was exhausted, seventy per cent. of men had to be rejected for physical impairment from military services; where the land was still fertile the corresponding percentage was thirty per cent. only.²⁸

Having plundered the countryside of its soil capital, civilisation proceeds next to waste what it has plundered. According to Professor

King, "On the basis of the data of Wolff, Kellner, and Carpenter, or of Hall, the people of the United States and of Europe are pouring into the sea, lakes or rivers, or into underground waters, from 5,794,300 to 12,000,000 pounds of nitrogen, 1,881,900 to 4,151,000 pounds of potassium, and 777,200 to 3,057,600 pounds of phosphorus per million of population annually."²⁹

Soil erosion has today become a world phenomenon. Already it has turned over one million square miles into a desert while "a far larger area is approaching desert condition."³⁰ General Smuts declared erosion to be the "biggest problem confronting the country, bigger than any politics."³¹ Experts have warned us that our present-day economy based on money values and the desire to exploit nature for quick profits has set deserts on the march and in the course of one century "*brought to the world's richest virgin lands a desolation compared with which all the ravages of the wars in history are negligible.*"³² (Italics mine). Erosion, in the words of Jacks and White, "has . . . been one of the most potent factors causing the downfall of former civilisations and empires whose ruined cities now lie amid barren wastes that once were the world's most fertile lands."³³ It is "humbling mighty nations, re-shaping their domestic and external policies and . . . altering the course of world history more radically than any war or revolution."³⁴

Erosion is not an isolated phenomenon. Rather it is like a cancer, a "localised symptom of a generalised pathological condition". There is this difference, however, that in the case of erosion the actual cause may be located as much on the site of the occurrence as "thousands of miles away from it". Erosion, therefore, does not admit of local or mere symptomatic treatment. It is a man-made disease and a highly contagious disease at that. A country ravaged by war may be restored to prosperity in a few years but a field denuded of its soil, we are warned, continues to spread devastation all around even after its own ruin is complete. "Cities may spring up like mushrooms, railways and roads may span a country, bank balances may multiply, but while the soil is deteriorating and disappearing the net movement is away from rather than towards a civilised state."³⁵

The onset of erosion is generally insidious. But once it gets under way, it spreads destruction in a geometrical progression.³⁶ All the productive capacity of the earth is confined to the thin living top layer of the soil which may vary from a few inches to a few feet in depth. Beneath it is a planet "as lifeless as the moon". It takes nature, we are told, not less but probably more than a thousand years for one inch of soil formation. But in the State of Missouri alone, it was recorded, the rate of erosion was such "as would result in the disappearance of seven inches of soil in twenty-four years." The ultimate result of unchecked soil erosion is "national extinction".³⁷

There is, however, a crumb of comfort. It is not too late yet.

The earth, if wisely handled, is rich enough still to maintain the existing human population even with its present rate of increase, for a long time to come. But if we do not retrace our steps betimes, we may find one day that the limit of safety has been passed and the process has become irreversible. In the words of Professor N. S. Shaler of Harvard University, "If mankind cannot devise and enforce a way of dealing with the earth which will preserve the source of life, we must look forward to a time . . . when our kind having wasted its great inheritance, will fade from the earth because of the ruin it has accomplished."³⁸ If our civilisation, therefore, is not to come to grief like the twenty-one civilisations whose history Dr. Toynbee has traced, we have no choice but to return from an exploitative economy to the economy of permanence.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture of 1935 reported that most of the area under cultivation in India had been under cultivation "for hundreds of years, and had reached its state of maximum impoverishment many years ago", and that "extensive areas" on the banks of large rivers had "lost all agricultural value".³⁹ Yet it devoted to the question of soil conservation just 1 page out of 675.

When soil erosion affects a whole country, it calls for "changing fundamentally the country's management and the way of the life of the people."⁴⁰ In the face of falling averages of production from the land and a rising population, therefore, there is no other course for such a country, as in the case of India, but to return to intensive, subsistence farming based on cattle economy as a way of life, supported by supplementary cottage industries. It offers the best chance for survival in the long run.

Paradoxical though it may sound, when the soil is denuded of its covering of vegetation a dense settled cover of population "up to the limit which the land can support" provides the best insurance against the forces causing erosion. "The densities of their populations give every acre of land a national value that may be out of all proportion to their money-earning power. The . . . people are compelled at all costs to conserve their soil. Conservation farming comes . . . naturally to them."⁴¹

This means that the people have to make up their mind to forego the short-cut to prosperity and power by converting soil capital into cash which applied science dangles before us, to curtail production of export commodities and learn to adjust themselves to a lower standard of living. It is a strong and unpalatable remedy but it is a remedy that "the Earth cannot forego until the wounds on its surface are healed." Sustained diligence and self-denial alone can restore what man's slovenliness and greed have despoiled. As Lord Northbourne put it: "When we want to be severely practical, we still say 'let us get back to earth.'"⁴²

4

No single factor has contributed more to the phenomenon of world-wide erosion and soil exhaustion than the great possibilities that have been opened up of "getting rich quickly" with the help of "new and powerful machines"⁴³ and "the transfer of capital across regional or political boundaries."⁴⁴ In the words of Lord Northbourne, "International debt and soil erosion are twin brother and sister."⁴⁵ Nineteenth century economy, particularly in the British Empire with its expanding power industry, colonial system of rule and huge overseas financial investments by the European powers, gave rise to a heavy, ceaseless drain of food and raw materials from the countries affected by it. Vast regions of the earth were as a result depleted of their soil fertility. "The New World acquired in a few years the fruits of the Old World's thousand-year struggle with Nature."⁴⁶ Western nations achieved a meteoric burst of prosperity and power for themselves without straining the soil within their own borders but only by robbing other countries of their soil fertility that had been maintained for thousands of years. In the exploited countries, as in India, population increased, roads and railways were built, there was rapid expansion of trade and industry, new cities sprang up, higher living standards were achieved for the privileged class, forests were cleared, pastures brought under cultivation, insects and vermin "which hold the balance between the organic and inorganic forces" were annihilated. But all this outward show of progress in the exploited countries was paid for in progressive deterioration of the soil, silted up rivers, recurring floods, droughts, dust-storms and famines and disease due to the deepening poverty and lowered stamina of the masses.

Money and mechanism today rule our society. "But a yet greater reality than they is the soil."⁴⁷ Agriculture, remarked Napoleon during his exile at St. Helena, is "the soul, the foundation of the kingdom". Trade and industry are good only when they are a sign of exuberant vitality. They cannot by themselves create vitality. Indeed they may be indicative of just the reverse. India's industrial development, for instance, and her favourable trade balances under the British rule were a sign not of her prosperity but exploitation.

So long as food and raw materials continue to be produced in one region to be consumed in another in bulk in pursuit of the philosophy of unlimited material wants in a limited world, nature's equilibrium cannot be maintained. The foundations of the economy of permanence can be laid only on the firm rock of regional self-sufficiency or, as Gandhiji called it, Swadeshi. Lord Northbourne is not alone in holding

that "it would almost certainly be better for humanity at large if trade in food, other than a few delicacies, were unknown." Other kinds of trade and commerce would then "tend to flourish exceedingly."⁴⁸

We have, therefore, to break free from money values and to learn to regard proper and full use of human and animal resources not only as the means but also as the end of our economy; to cultivate an attitude of humility towards nature and of "reverence for life" including not only trees and plants but wild life as well.

Insects and worms and some of the rodents and burrowing animals play an important part in the restoration and maintenance of the soil's equilibrium. Earthworms are known to turn and aerate the soil to a depth of from 4 to 6 feet. Some animals though not directly useful to agriculture "fit into a complicated ecological scheme, as one of the links in a food cycle."⁴⁹ They may provide food to other species that are useful to agriculture or indirectly help agriculture by living upon insects, plants and animals that are destructive of crops. Some birds in this way more than compensate the farmer for all the grain they eat by destroying insects and pests harmful to him. The conservation of wild life has consequently come to be regarded in the United States "as an integral part of the conservation of soil, vegetation and water." According to the Annual Report for 1936-37 of the Bureau of Animal Population of the University of Oxford, "There is no human being who is not directly or indirectly influenced by animal populations. . . . There is less of a moral problem," the report goes on to say, "about going out on a doubtful day without an umbrella than there is in ordering the destruction of a species on the chance that it may be doing harm to human interests." Soil erosion, one of the foremost authorities on soil conservation tells us, "has made a knowledge of the underlying principle of human ecology — the art of living together with animals, insects and plants — one of the most urgent needs of mankind."⁵⁰

Above all, we have to learn to put a curb on our material wants. Soil erosion and floods are phenomena practically unknown to nature in the raw, where man has not upset its ordered domain by his ignorant interference and short-sighted greed. The disharmony in nature is only a part of the disharmony within our own being. To eradicate it, we have to restore the balance between the material and the spiritual. This is the function of religion. "Religion . . . is needed for an enduring food supply for man and for a sound ecological relationship between man and earth and all its other creatures. Only the spirit is strong enough to curb man's unruly desire for power, his selfishness, greed, pride, short-sightedness, and tendency to exploit others."⁵¹

A wag has described Socialism as "capitalism with a different pair of pants". Witticism apart, the observation has a solid foundation in fact. Both Socialism and capitalism have based themselves on the same set of values. They are both ruled largely by utilitarian and

efficiency consideration. Their struggle for supremacy is within the same framework of dominant urbanism and money values. Socialism has taken it for granted that all "the problems of production were solved by capitalism" long ago and all that remains to be done is "to redistribute the fruits in more equitable fashion."⁵² Both share the Marxist prejudice against the peasant and look forward to the day when farming would be done away with, and agriculture carried on as an "industry" with machines and armies of land workers. "Is it not . . . self-evident," wrote H. J. Massingham, the well-known English publicist, in *The New Statesman and Nation*, "that science which has created the industrial State . . . regards the peasant as belonging to an outmoded form of society, as almost the equivalent of the savage and as an impediment to the full development of a more enlightened agriculture?" The fact must be faced, he went on to add, that industrial civilisation is "radically hostile to the peasant" and "not until industrialism is itself modified can his value and necessity . . . be seen in right perspective."⁵³

There are, however, signs of a coming change. While there were ample food surpluses to draw upon, the cities could go on with their "wholesale plunder" of the chemical fertility and physical structure of the soil. But with half the civilised world now living in cities and a steady increase in the world's population, it is now beginning to be realised that this must stop. Food-exporting areas have less and less of food available for export. Industry can, therefore, no longer count upon endless supplies from outside to keep it going as in the heyday of its power. It was time, Edward Hyams recently warned, that in a world of shrinking food resources we learnt to "break free of the preoccupation with an urban, industrial state of mind", understood the "difference between a peasantry and a rural population of proletarians" and "set about creating a peasantry."⁵⁴

Civilisations come and civilisations go but the land remains. "If a civilisation is such that it degrades the soil, then it is the civilisation, and not the soil, that comes to an end."⁵⁵ Sooner or later, therefore, sooner rather than later, we have got to come to terms with nature and start building afresh from the start. The struggle for existence that has hitherto principally been a struggle for markets is bound in not very distant future to become a struggle for water. Civilisation will then have to set about to base itself on a new, symbiotic relationship with nature. In that set up it is obvious that subsistence farming-cum-handicrafts will have to be the way of life for the bulk of the population. The social and political ascendancy of the town will end, "the power of the country in relation to that of the towns will increase. The men who rule the rivers according to the way they manage the land, will rule the nation. They may not have the wealth, but collectively they will have the power now in the hands of the captains of industry. Industry will become the handmaid of a balanced and

fruitful agriculture upon whose enduring prosperity the fate of the towns will depend.”⁵⁶

5

Of late there have been several movements toward the dispersion of industry. Concentration of industry in big towns, it has been found, is not good for industry itself and in any case the advent of the atom bomb has rendered dispersion of industry inevitable. By breaking up big industrial units into a number of small ones and removing them to the villages, it is claimed, industrialism will be cured of most of its glaring evils and the conflict between industry and agriculture will be resolved. Geographical dispersion of industry and its location in the countryside is, however, as different from the decentralised economy that Gandhiji aimed at as chalk is from cheese. As an economic and social policy, decentralisation can be effective only on the basis of individual production, and individual production is not mass production on a reduced scale. Individual handicrafts production and mass-production in the villages represent two rival, incompatible and mutually exclusive systems of economy with different norms, *raison d'être* and spheres of utility. When Henry Ford hit upon the idea of the assembly-line taking jobs to the workers instead of the workers having to walk to various jobs in different parts of the workshop, it was unquestionably a more economical way of factory management. It cut down costs but it did not mean any abatement of either the profits or the power of the industrial magnate. Dispersion of industry and its location in the countryside to facilitate mass production in the vicinity of the homes of the country folk, by taking the assembly-line right into the countryside, might provide to the industrialist a more thorough and efficient means of the economic and biological exploitation of the material and human resources of the countryside. It turns the farm into an adjunct to the factory and the countryside into a larder for the non-producing industrial city proletariat to draw upon, but it means absolutely no lessening of the political and economic control of industry and high finance, rather the reverse. The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. The city must get off the back of the village. But industrialisation on a mass scale, as Gandhiji pointed out, would “necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers, as the problems of competition and marketing come in.”⁵⁷ The city-bred intellectual, therefore, who wants to revive the village without foreswearing industrialisation and mass-production is like a well-meaning philanthropist fancying he can, by his charity, help the man on whose back he is riding without getting off his back. The Charkha and the allied industries

alone, maintained Gandhiji, could stop exploitation of the villages, and abolish all inequalities both social and economic between the urban and the rural. "The rising consciousness of the strength which non-violence gives to the people, and their intelligent refusal to cooperate in their slavery must bring about equality."⁵⁸

In his luminous study *Life and the Death of the Christian West*, characterised by H. J. Massingham in his foreword to it as "full of power and vision" and "decidedly prophetic", Albert Gleizes has brilliantly analysed the fallacy underlying the favourite modern concept of the resuscitation of village life by the "modernisation of the village". The modern "intellectual", he observes, has come to realise that "the Great City is not an organism which adds, but an organism which subtracts" and the desertion from the countryside must be fought. He is quite concerned about it and there is no question as to his sincerity. But having lost contact with reality the intellectuals have become incapable of "burning what they have worshipped and worshipping what they have burnt. . . . The notion of progress prevents them from getting rid of all the things that cumber the scene." They do not wish to forego any of their "conquests". They imagine that "by mass-production organised in the homes, by rendering the pleasures of town life accessible to country folk, by bringing to them the joys of the telephone, the follies of the cinema, and the cacophony of wireless, the country youths will be induced to remain in their homes, even though at the same time the primary school, democratic and state-controlled, intellectualises them and adapts them to everything except life on the land." This is a vain hope. The decay of the countryside is, in the final analysis, the result of a mental attitude, a sense of values which the Great City embodies. The town, therefore, cannot "because of that very state of mind, exercise outwardly an influence which would be a negation of itself. It is . . . consistent in spreading outwards and demanding a state of submission to itself." This is the reason why, Gleizes concludes, the city-bred intellectuals' panaceas for the ills of the countryside all prove inadequate. So long as they have not changed their own way of life and themselves guard "most jealously" their peculiar city mentality, their best intentions notwithstanding, their measures are bound to go askew and "bring about the very results they fear."

"Mankind must refrain," warns Eric Morgan in his monograph *Vitality and Civilisation*, "from imposing middle class urban standards upon her out-of-door rural civilisation." Urbanisation of the villages can bring no gain to civilisation. It can only result in the drying up at the source of the springs of vitality from which the urban has been in the habit of replenishing his exhausted stock.

It follows from this that the recovery of the countryside will come not by extension of "urban amenities" to the village but by a

renunciation of the material values that the city stands for, or, as Gandhiji used to say, by the intelligentsia dying to the town to be reborn in the village. Those who have the faith must, therefore, in the words of Albert Gleizes, find their "way back to the country and have enough patience to wait for the home-coming of those who, even against their will, must one day return to it."⁵⁹

6

There is in mechanism an illusory quality even at its hypothetical best. It holds out glittering promises which at first sight seem to be perfectly capable of fulfilment. But at the same time it sets up compensatory reactions which largely nullify its achievements. For instance, it creates new and ever expanding fields of employment but it displaces men already employed quicker than it creates new jobs. In the result "one man and a machine replace ten hand workers. . . . One man stays and nine men go. Society has gained a cheaper process, and nine men have lost their jobs. The final net gain is not always so clear."⁶⁰ No answer has yet been found to the problem of "frictional unemployment" and the advent of automation threatens to make matters worse.

Take next the progress in the means of locomotion. It should have enabled us to cut down travelling time. But, as Bertrand Russell has pointed out, there seems to be a law that instead of cutting down travelling time, improvement in the means of transportation only increases the area over which people travel and consequently the time they spend in travelling—first by enabling them to live at a distance from their work, then compelling them to do so. In the words of Austin Freeman, what was to begin with a matter of choice soon became a matter of necessity. "The increased speed and increased distances became the normal speed and distances, upon which the ordinary conditions of life were based."⁶¹ Human activities became adjusted to the new facilities and in becoming adjusted absorbed the surplus. Increased facilities for locomotion have thus actually robbed man of leisure so that after a century of mechanical progress everybody complains of the "hurry", "strenuousness" and "lack of leisure" of "these days of high pressure", and nostalgically looks back to the quiet, unhurried life of old days when there were fewer "conveniences of life" but more comfort, restricted production but greater abundance of the fundamental necessities of life within the reach of everybody.

The increased productive efficiency by the use of the machine likewise is largely offset by the mounting cost of finding suitable substitutes for natural resources that are being squandered at a fantastic rate, owing to the wasteful habits in consumption and careless

handling of raw materials in the process of manufacture engendered by "disrespect" for cheap products of machine industry. "All the Western nations," observes Stuart Chase, "have demonstrated their fitness to be classed as prodigal sons."⁶²

It has been argued that the fear of the depletion of natural resources is greatly exaggerated like fears about possible cooling of the sun or shift in the earth's axis. "The miracles of science are yet in their infancy, surely something will be found," it is airily declared. "I know all about the miracles of science," answers Stuart Chase, "and some of its majestic failures—and, I ask you, gentlemen, what precisely, and at what cost, will be found?"⁶³

Finally, take cheapness. Mass-production has cut down paper costs. But for every problem that the machine has solved, it has created many more that did not exist before, and which even the majestic march of science has been unable to cope with or has been able to cope with only in part. Can any wonder drug or wizardry of modern surgery make up for the alarming spread of cancer, diabetes, hyper-tension and heart-diseases due to "modern living"? We first deprive the people of the benefits of natural life—fresh air, sunshine and fresh, whole foods by uprooting them from their natural environment and aggregating them in specialised areas and then try to provide them with artificial ultra-violet light, concentrated vitamins, public parks, air-conditioning and suburban workers' settlements as substitutes. And what poor substitutes they are! The colossal problems in national health and fitness which this creates; providing of transport and civic amenities, and sickness, old age and unemployment insurance benefits to masses of men cut off from the springs of vitality swells the budget of social costs. The biological cost and the cost in terms of social unrest, class conflict and mental ill health; reckless squandering of natural resources and the resulting deterioration of man's inheritance are even heavier. But as these are all "long term bills collectable in the indeterminate future", and do not enter into the balance-sheet of the money costs of production, nobody bothers about them and the illusion of "prosperity" and "cheapness" continues.

Before independence in the early stages of the labours of the Planning Committee appointed by the Congress—the precursor of the present Planning Commission—it was once suggested to the Committee that if a small excise duty to the tune of two and a half per cent. or so were put on mill cloth and a corresponding subsidy given to Khadi, it would equalise the price of Khadi and mill cloth. The reply given was that it would be "wrong in principle" to prop up "inherently uneconomical industries" and make them compete with machine production as it would curtail the "productive capacity" of the country. Gandhiji rebutted this. It was the factory product, he pointed out, that had over long periods received and still continued to receive visible

and invisible subsidy at the cost of the tax-payer in the form of cheap railway transport, special municipal facilities, agricultural and food policies designed to cheapen the cost of the raw materials and food for the non-producing urban and industrial population at the cost of the non-urban; housing and other amenities for the industrial labour; institutions for technical research and training, and so on. But as this at the same time provided us with concomitants of progress—quick travelling, motor cars, radio, cinema, electric light and a thousand and one thrills of city life to which we have got accustomed—we did not mind the cost.

Cheapness or dearness of a commodity is thus not an inherent quality but a “conferred attribute”. It cannot be considered apart from the values and the way of life we consider desirable for ourselves. It is part of a “package deal”. Apart from it, it has no validity. Nothing can be cheaper than Khadi when it is produced from the cotton grown by the consumer himself for his own use. Nor can any supply of synthetic vitamins take the place of what home-grown fresh vegetables, unprocessed whole foods and sunshine provide free to the worker who works upon and lives on and out of his plot of land. Similarly can there be any substitute for the natural health, vigour and vitality which direct relationship with the soil gives to the peasantry? But when our preoccupation is with money values and our thinking in terms of “prestige” and “power”, the demands of commerce and industry become easily equated with “national interest”. The things that make for the primary well-being of man are neglected.

Take the losing battle that was fought in the nineteen twenties over the question of restoration of the ancient overflow irrigation system of Bengal. It had answered the need of rural Bengal for over two thousand years. Not only did it provide an ideal single solution to Bengal’s inter-locking problems of flood and malaria control, cheap inland transport for the better part of the year and renewal of soil fertility but it also brought into being a community organisation based on irrigation rights which, by requiring each to regard his neighbour’s interest as his own, elevated all those who engaged in it, and provided “a better field for developing character than any school.”⁶⁴

There is a heavy rainfall in Bengal in the wet season. But owing to the peculiar nature of sub-soil, the underground water-level sinks rapidly after the rains and a serious shortage of water supply occurs at a time when it is most needed. As a result tanks and wells dry up or become stagnant and breed malaria and a host of other epidemics. The only remedy for it, it was pointed out by Dr. Bentley, the then Director of Public Health, Bengal, in his masterly thesis, “Malaria and the Irrigation in Bengal” was to flush them and “to maintain

saturation of the sub-soil by impounding as much of rainfall as possible on the surface and keeping it there as long as possible." This was formerly done—particularly in the western and central division of Bengal—by flooding the tanks and rice fields with the muddy spill of the rivers in spate and storing up the rain water in tanks. Of the latter there were at one time over fifty thousand in operation in Burdwan district alone. Percolation from the rice fields and from the storage tanks maintained the underground reserve of water at a level 10 to 15 feet higher than it is today and prevented the drying up of wet crops in summer and of wells and tanks in the dry season. A system of what were originally irrigation canals dug by human labour existed in Bengal from very ancient times. The silt-bearing top film of water from the rivers in flood was led into the rice fields, where the silt deposited. River silt has a very high manureal value. It enriched the cultivation and killed noxious weeds in the tanks and in the rice fields. Every tank and every rice field had its distributory, respectively to flush or to irrigate it. Along with the silt came the eggs of the carp. Carp is a larvicidal fish. It devoured all the larvae of the anapholes, besides providing much needed nourishment to the rice eating peasantry. Removal of the silt from the river water prevented the silting up of the rivers at the mouth so that there were no floods. But during a period of misrule and political chaos which disorganised the peasantry and the high degree of cooperation that is necessary for the operation of this system, the water channels got silted up and later were declared by ignorant British engineers to be "dead" or "blind" ("kana"). A series of devastating floods followed. Erection of protective embankments to confine them made them worse. The water-tight protective embankments and the railway embankment of the Eastern Bengal Railway cut across the natural contours of the land, interrupting the natural drainage. A severe epidemic of malaria followed almost immediately, carrying off in one district one-third of the total population in a decade. Areas that were once celebrated as "health resorts" became "decadent areas". Sir William Willcocks, one of the greatest irrigation engineers that the world has known, in vain pleaded that trifling initial expenditure—as such expenditures go—was all that was necessary to resuscitate these "dead-rivers" with the cooperation of the peasantry. The vicious circle once broken, the rest of the project would then pay its way. But the rivalry of the steam navigation river flotilla companies and of railway transport came in the way. In the result the one thing that could have restored to the peasantry "the old prosperous days, when irrigation with the muddy water of the Ganges flood was the heritage of all"⁶⁵ was never attempted. Millions upon millions were spent on malaria and flood control projects. And for seventy years, embankments were allowed "to impoverish lands, and impoverish people and afflict them with malaria,

when a trifling expenditure of money could bring relief.”⁶⁶ In the words of Sir William Willcocks : “The Irrigation Department has tried its hand at every kind of irrigation except the ancient irrigation. The resulting poverty of soil, destruction of fish, introduction of malaria and congestion of the rivers have stalked the canals and banks, and the country is strewn today with the wrecks of useless and harmful works.”⁶⁷

Gandhiji had no partiality for primitive methods of production as such. He only challenged the sanity of what so often passes for progress these days. “I have heard many of our countrymen say,” he wrote, “that we will gain American wealth but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt, if it is made, is foredoomed to failure. We cannot be ‘wise, temperate and furious’ in a moment. . . . It is not possible to conceive gods inhabiting a land which is made hideous by the smoke and the din of mill chimneys and factories and whose roadways are traversed by rushing engines, dragging numerous cars crowded with men who know not for the most part what they are after, who are often absent-minded, and whose tempers do not improve by being uncomfortably packed like sardines in boxes and finding themselves in the midst of utter strangers, who would oust them if they could and whom they would, in their turn, oust similarly. I refer to these things because they are held to be symbolical of material progress. But they add not an atom to our happiness.”⁶⁸

It is a curious perversion of logic, explained only by the highly befuddled sophistication of the modern mind divorced from realities, to claim as triumphs of science cures however marvellous in themselves they may be, for ills which we ourselves have, in the first place, created and which multiply at a faster rate than our ability to cope with them. Gandhiji was uncompromisingly opposed to the “mania for mass production” which made production an end in itself to be achieved by the sacrifice of human values in the pursuit of the abstraction called “national wealth” and “prosperity”. “Granting for the moment,” he observed, “that machinery may supply all the needs of humanity, still, it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that you would have to go about in a round-about way to regulate distribution, whereas, if there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated, and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation. . . . When production and consumption both become localised, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end. . . . Oh yes, mass-production certainly . . . but mass-production (on individual basis) in people’s own homes. If you multiply individual production millions of times, would it not give you

mass-production on a tremendous scale? . . . Your 'mass-production' is . . . production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery. . . . My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions."⁶⁹

Gandhiji wanted man to be restored to his proper place in the scheme of things, and production to be geared to the primary well-being of man instead of men being used as expendable material to increase production. Where money and mechanism rule, said Gandhiji, "capital exploits the labour of a few to multiply itself, but the sum total of the labour of the crores, wisely utilised, automatically increases the wealth of the crores."⁷⁰ He wanted labour to be so used that production should itself be a source of life, joy, and freedom, instead of any one of these being sacrificed to production and all to money values. Therein lay the key to true democracy.

7

What about the standard of living? Would this not lead to a "lower standard of living"? The answer depends on what we mean by a high standard of living. If by "a high standard of living" is meant that those who have not enough to eat should have plenty of fresh, wholesome, balanced diet, those who are naked should have simple but artistic, durable clothes, those who are living in ill-lighted, ill-ventilated slums or have no shelters should have sunny, airy, cozy dwellings amid agreeable surroundings to live in, then the system of economy recommended by Gandhiji is the most efficient, the most inexpensive and the surest way of insuring a decent standard of living to the people at large in the immediate present.

This is not, however, what is probably meant when people talk of raising the living standard. By the raised standard of living they mean "modern living". The false values which we have adopted make us think that if a man wields the hoe on his farm and consumes home-grown, garden-fresh vegetables and fruit, it is a low, primitive style of living. If the people grow up in healthy, natural surroundings so that they sing and play out of sheer exuberance of the joy of living, they are uncultured village louts. But if they sit glumly round the radio and listen to "canned" music in the selection of which they have no choice, it is the hall-mark of culture. If the worker plies his craft in his village where he will have fresh air and sunshine free all the year round, a variety in his occupation and natural opportunities for recreation, it is a rustic style of living. But if he is provided a fortnight's escape from the soul-killing toil of the

factory with a free holiday in the countryside, it is the realisation of the workers' utopia.

In Gandhiji's world, the people may have less of the gaudy goods of life—fewer “toys of civilisation”—but they will live in close contact with nature and enjoy abundance of fresh, wholesome food which they could obtain by their own labour, and sunshine, fresh air and aesthetic delights which nature freely provides, but which it costs so much to make available even in a niggardly measure to the urban industrial workers synthetically. Work will not be the antithesis of life but a means of realising the full content of life—a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. There will be no poverty in essentials amidst a plenty of non-essentials. The needs of the many will not be sacrificed to the privileges of the few or for the abstraction called “national prosperity” and “progress”. People will enjoy unrationed freedom. Armed with new skills and techniques that will increase their productive power without curtailing individual freedom; freed from the domination of high finance, high technology and the aristocracy of intellect, they will for the first time take their destiny in their own hands and have an equal opportunity with the tallest in the land to realise the “highest realisable in life”.

There is a world of difference between the means for comfort and the standard of comfort achieved. While the means for comfort have increased enormously as a result of mechanical progress, it is questionable whether the same can be said of the standard of comfort achieved for the millions. “We are, in fact, all cluttered up with progress,” observes Stuart Chase. In the words of Virgil Jordan, “Prosperity is an overworked word and . . . it has been achieved in part at the expense of the older industries furnishing the basic materials and the fundamental services.”⁷¹ Stuart Chase has shown by facts and figures that a good half of the huge pile of raw materials, that goes into the living of an average American family, is wasted in exploitation, another large percentage is lost in the process of manufacture; leaving a balance for final consumption “a high percentage” of which is “worthless junk”. It would perhaps have been not “too great a sacrifice”, he holds, to have exchanged greater part of this for more wholesome food, more and better clothing and other necessities of life for the bulk of the population. “We are certainly housed more glitteringly, fed more variously and clothed more diaphanously,” he goes on to remark, but “we are not as a nation housed more spaciouly, fed more heartily or clothed or shod more voluminously than a generation ago.”⁷² “Various nature peoples located in regions of abundant food supply have, with fewer material things, probably been more comfortable.”⁷³

Be that as it may, there is not much sense in aiming at a high living standard if, as a result, the life process itself is undermined.

There is a growing volume of evidence to show that owing to malnutrition due to the rapidly declining soil fertility, sedentary living and consumption of refined and concentrated foods, which act like a stimulant drug; and spread of wrong health behaviour which seems to grow instead of lessening with the spread of "progress", dominant urbanism has been detrimental to "primary human health". The average life-span of man has increased as a result of improvement in the standards of public health and the progress that the science of medicine has made, but the incidence of morbidity due to "modern living" has at the same time increased at such a rate as to cause "the utmost apprehension". Testified Professor Martin Sihle, Director of the University of Medical Clinic of Riga: "Even when we consider the sense organs of our patients, deviation into pathological functioning frequently strikes us. One person is short-sighted, another hears badly, a third has so-called chronic cold . . . lung apices function badly . . . heart is often enlarged. . . . And the organs of digestion? Few men have them in complete working order."⁷⁴

According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, in a group of 1,000 Americans aged 15 and over, there would be found 976 instances of disease or disorder, ranging from "anaemia, obesity, tuberculosis to some 20 additional physical defects and ailments." Out of 14 million young Americans examined for the military draft prior to and during the Second World War, only two million were up to standard. The percentage of increase in the incidence of diabetes in the U.S.A., we are informed, "outaverages the increase in the birth rate"; more than seven million Americans are arthritic; one out of ten healthy American men has a stomach ulcer; one out of six is sterile.⁷⁵

On top of this there come the neuro-psychic complaints, hysteria and neurosis. The report of the Medical Statistics Division of the Office of the Surgeon-General of the United States for 1946 showed that 12 per cent. of the total 15 million men examined in the draft for the U.S. Army in the Second World War were rejected for neuro-psychiatric disorders. In 1945 these disorders accounted for 657,393 or 38 per cent. of all the hospital beds in the country. The total costs and losses due to mental illness in the United States for 1944 were estimated at 1,295 million dollars.⁷⁶

The staggering increase in the production and sale of "tranquillising drugs", "happiness pills" and so on which in some of the most highly industrialised countries in the West exceeds the sale and consumption of all the other pharmaceuticals put together, is another pointer whose significance cannot be missed.

It is a bad economy under which "wealth accumulates and men decay." The daily life of a rural worker is highly educative. A farmer must know about weather, seasons, crops, trees, plants and domestic

and wild animals. A handicraftsman, similarly, must know about woods, metals, clays and textile fibres etc. A rural worker's day-to-day living contact with his environment, testifies Stuart Chase, who is certainly no enemy of mechanical progress, "tends not only to make him wise in a basic sort of way, but to make him courageous, handy, self-reliant, and independent."⁷⁷ The daily routine of an urban worker, on the other hand, has no such educational significance. "Survival for him depends upon ability to dodge motor-cars; to read the time tables, warning signals and the labels on packaged foods; upon the use of money and the telephone, the ordering of repair mechanics; and certain details in the general theory of double entry accounting" etc. He may and usually does learn something more but "it seldom has anything to do with the specific conditions of his environment, and has no place in his scheme of survival." As a result, he tends to lack "that self-reliance and handiness, that certain basic wisdom, which are the normal heritage of the pioneer, of the resident in the self-sustaining village."⁷⁸ And so we have the curious phenomenon, to which Austin Freeman has drawn attention, that in a given race the continued growth of knowledge may go hand-in-hand with "a generally inferior intelligence."⁷⁹ The results of standard I.Q. tests—tests for the quotient of intelligence—in Great Britain and in the U.S.A. point to a lowering by 1 to 2 points on the I.Q. scale for each generation.⁸⁰

It is sometimes argued that the increase in neurasthenia in factory populations is incidental and will be remedied as a result of improvements in industrial conditions. This is not true either in theory or in fact. Indeed, the studies of an eminent doctor of London Hospital, Dr. Culpin, revealed that there was a high rate of neurasthenia in a shop "where working conditions were of the best, and a low rate in a shop where speeding-up and other conditions were far worse."⁸¹ The increase in the incidence of neurosis among modern machine workers seems to have little or no relation to the work or the working environment. It is not an incidental factor, but an "institutional effect" inherent in the character of the work itself.

In the pre-industrial era, when the worker worked in the midst of his family in an agreeable and interesting environment, he was free to adjust and vary his hours of work, rest and play according to his convenience. He was a craftsman, whether working in the field or in the workshop. His activity provided him with variety and change⁸² and called for the exercise of his intelligence and skill. He saw products of his labour grow under his hand. His work gave him creative satisfaction. The machine worker cannot see the relation between his labour and the finished product. He has ceased to be a craftsman and become a "hand". He produces nothing; the machine produces everything. He merely tends the machine. A split occurs in the

“psychological unity of work and result”. The repetitive nature of his occupation, coupled with the tireless tempo of the machine to which he is geared, engenders a continuous physiological and psychological strain. The result is irritability, discontent and revolt against work. He tries to recapture in play what he is denied in work. But he is so numbed in body and mind at the end of the day that “he has lost the very faculty of playing.”⁸³ Leisure with him becomes “a pervasive emptiness . . . a vacuum, a desperate state of vacancy.”⁸⁴ All he feels up to is to fill it with passive entertainment, “not playing . . . but watching . . . games; not drama, but theatre-going; not walking, but riding in an automobile.”⁸⁵ This is the significance of the mushrooming of what has been described as “exhibitionist” art and culture in our times.⁸⁶ The total annual cost of various forms of play and diversion of this character for the United States was estimated by Stuart Chase at 21 billions of dollars—“not far from a fourth of the national income.”⁸⁷ The bulk of this, he points out, is not “recreation” i.e. “creating again in play the balance that has been lost in work” but “decreation” i.e. “compounding the lost balance through unrewarding forms of play.”⁸⁸ This is a sign not of progress but of incipient decadence and decline as the history of Imperial Rome and other civilisations that have passed away testifies.

The true craftsman “has no leisure but only rest.” It is not the “human soul in its freedom,” observes Herbert Read, the educationist, but the soul “crowded into cities, cut off from the soil and seasons, (and) deprived of natural alternations of satisfying activities” that craves for expensive entertainments to dissipate its boredom.⁸⁹ The modern problem of “leisure” is a symptom of the “vast social neurosis” which is one of the outstanding facts of our time.

All talk of “emancipation from work” opening the gateway to “recreative leisure” which would make cultured existence possible for each and for all is, therefore, sheer nonsense. Work and play must, in the words of Stuart Chase, “move in some sort of integrated balance. If you kill the instinct of workmanship, the play instinct is also killed.”⁹⁰

The picture that confronts us today is of “sick man and sick society”. An eminent medical authority, Dr. James L. Halliday, M.D., in a recent work of his on psycho-social medicine *A Study of Sick Society* points out that even the science of medicine is today more occupied in its patients with “consequences of a sick society than with bacteria, purely physiological illness or material inadequacies.” An important part of present-day illness, he shows, is the consequence of “social disintegration and declining vitality resulting from the way people live.” Our social sickness is a reflection of our own psychological sickness. A well integrated community like a well integrated individual is resistant to invasion by unhealthy elements and tends to

throw them out. But when its power of resistance declines, "the psychosomatic illness becomes increasingly infectious and the community itself becomes sick." "Class-war" and "leadership for destruction" are one of the manifestations of this sickness.

Wars are increasing in their destructiveness, frequency and scope, and this makes the issue of the mental health of man and society a matter of supreme concern. Scientific studies of "street-corner society" have been made, Herbert Read tells us, and they reveal that "it is a society with leisure—that is to say, spare time—and without compensatory occupation" out of which "crime, gangsterdom and fascism inevitably develop."⁹¹ There is a growing class of people today in our midst who are proud of their jobs because of the remuneration and social status it gives them but they hate the very sight of their work. It is they who, to cover "the essential emptiness of boredom of their occupation" give themselves up to the advancement of morbid dreams of ambition and power. Gandhiji, therefore, said that the goal of economic progress should be "human happiness combined with full mental and moral development."⁹² In other words, our way of life must be such as would provide us not only with material means of existence but also with satisfying activities. Such activities in the nature of things cannot be "casual, optional activities like sports or games", but "purposeful activities"—activities related to our and society's primary upkeep—and involving not only the exercise of our intelligence and skill but our muscles also. For "muscles have a life of their own unless they are trained to purposeful actions."⁹³

Even if this means a little more of physical toil, and sacrifice of some of the urban comforts to which we have become accustomed, it does not matter much. It would mean more life and health and happiness to the millions and it would not be too great a price to pay for peace. There is no truer observation than Read's that "war is a part of the price we pay for mechanised system of production, for comfort and convenience and a higher standard of living."⁹⁴

Fundamental to all consideration of human progress is the question of vitality. Vitality has been defined as "the fund of life and capacity to maintain life accumulated and preserved from generation to generation through our entire physical and cultural inheritance."⁹⁵ The course of history, points out Griscom Morgan in his study *Vitality and Civilisation*, "is as much controlled by vitality as it is by politics, economics, or ideas."⁹⁶ Time and again in history, sudden, brief bursts of civilisation have been achieved by exploiting the accumulated vital reserves of the people. The result invariably was exhaustion and extinction of such civilisations.

Professor Sorokin has called the village the "producer", the town the "consumer" of populations. Life springs from the soil. Culture

and vitality are born in the village. The city is the place where they are exploited and squandered and where they ultimately die. "The climax of the growth of the city and the developments of the city arts, science and commerce," noted that great traveller, statesman and philosopher of history, Ibn Khaldun, "is the beginning of the decay and degeneration of the city and of the whole of society. . . . *The average curve of the rising and degenerating of urban families is the space of four generations.*" (Italics mine).

A purely urban society of men has never been known to be able to maintain itself without replenishing its exhausted stock by recruitment from the countryside. This continuous biological exploitation of the country by the town is one of the most significant facts of industrial civilisation.

Contrary to the general belief, it is not the hard toil or material inadequacies that have contributed to the present biological deterioration of industrial populations but the high standard of comfort and soft living which modern progress has made possible. Adversity and physical labour even "compel" the accumulation and conservation of vital powers. "When most people could not live actively after the sun had set, and winter months forced much inactivity, nature contributed to the conservation of vitality."⁹⁷ But when a man can see no meaning in his occupation and returns home after a hard day's work with his thwarted creative instinct in full revolt, he is led to seek relief in all kinds of distractions which drain him of his vital energy.⁹⁸ The needs of parenthood, family life and community responsibility on which the survival of a civilisation depends are neglected.

The true criterion of the achievement of a nation or a civilisation is not its production statistics but its power to last. As a result of making human values subservient to economic progress, we are warned, there is taking place today in Western society "a dissipation of human resources which may have decisive effect on our destiny."⁹⁹ In this both capitalism and Communism are equally guilty. "Having the common man at their mercy both exploit vital powers ruthlessly to achieve the tremendous works of civilisation. The cost in terms of the future is not counted."¹⁰⁰

The evidence of the skeletal remains from civilisations that have passed away shows that growth of urbanism, commercialism, decay of farming and consumption of imported food stuffs resulting in the prevalence of certain "diseases of civilisation" such as bad teeth, rheumatism, gouts, etc. invariably heralded the decline of those civilisations. As anybody who runs can see, these warning signals are not wanting in our midst today. We can ignore the writing on the wall only at our peril.

8

Democracy is today facing a crisis. There is a contradiction between democracy and abundance, equality and individual freedom, progress and peace. Cutting across all cracies and isms looms the problem of privilege. Under democracy it appears as a monopoly of the means of production and distribution, under dictatorship as a monopoly of political power, and in both as a monopoly of intellect, technological knowledge and specialised experience. Form changes but the inequality remains. Unrestrained individualism breeds inequalities. If we try to remove inequalities by State interference, freedom itself goes under.

Democracy has been defined as "a system of Government in which every adult citizen is equally free to express his views and desires" and "to influence . . . his fellow citizens to decide according to those views and to implement those desires."¹⁰¹ Freedom, however, is not a "mere catalogue of abstract rights", it must also include the ability to take advantage of and freely exercise these rights.

Present-day forms of democracy were by and large evolved when the doctrines of free enterprise and the inevitability of progress ruled supreme: "Man's self-interest is God's providence" (Malthus); Economic freedom was a law of God, "eternal and immutable" (Cobden and Bright); "By each man following his own individual interest with the minimum of restriction, the public wealth would be best promoted" (Adam Smith). Progress was the key to abundance, and free enterprise the key to progress. Riches, it was argued, can preen its feathers over poverty but not over universal wealth. Science and industry would insure abundance for all. With no spectre of poverty or insecurity to exploit, exploitation would by itself cease; the very motive for domination would go; prestige would be sought in other and possibly nobler channels, and the era of democracy and permanent peace at last dawn upon earth.

Glaring economic inequalities and other evils of unrestrained competition under capitalistic individualism have since caused the pendulum to swing in the opposite direction and the necessity of State action to mitigate these evils has come to be universally recognised. But experience has shown that once the State begins to interfere it is led, by the very logic of its action, to regulate more and more of the people's lives and activities, and those who stand for democratic values, faced with "the competitive efficiency of their totalitarian rivals", are forced either to "adopt totalitarian methods of control" or else, "by clinging to outworn democratic forms . . . yield position after position."¹⁰²

This is the significance of the emergence of totalitarianism that the world has of late witnessed. In the words of Gerald Heard: "The intense and savage regimentation of the Totalitarian States is simply the contractive reflex of peoples too long exposed to private and general futility. The goose step is no more than an attempt to shake off that goose flesh feeling."¹⁰³

At the root of it all lies our false standard of values. Whilst it is a truism that democracy and freedom cease to have any meaning to a people who lacks the elementary necessities of life, it is not less true that hankering more and more after worldly goods becomes a hindrance to democracy and can only be satisfied at the cost of individual freedom.

The system of mass production, which a desire to have more and more of material goods has brought into being, has created a "baffling vastness" in society in which the individual gets lost. Far-flung markets have been created for goods which are produced at one end to be consumed at the other. Price mechanism and fluctuations of exchange have become mysterious and incomprehensible to any but the specialist. The same about technology. We have the testimony of Stuart Chase that "there is . . . an alarming shrinkage in the average man's understanding of the technology which shelters, clothes and feeds him. Technical achievement and public ignorance of its implications are tending to move with equal velocity in opposite directions."¹⁰⁴ The average individual who has to work for a living for himself and his family has neither the time nor the special training to study or understand the intricacies of the industrial and economic structure which surrounds him or its working. He finds himself placed, as it were, on a conveyor belt on whose smooth running his continued existence depends. He must cooperate willy-nilly to keep it going or be lost. He can exercise very little real control over it; his initiative counts for nothing. He has to let his thinking be done by others. A new ruling class of powerful executives in an individualistic order and of politicians, planners, specialists and bureaucrats under planned economy thus springs up. Privilege returns under a new face. Equality is sacrificed to the pursuit of abundance. It is a disquieting feature of the technological age that personal liberty has come to be "less and less valued" by the population at large.¹⁰⁵

Gandhiji did not despise economic progress. On the contrary he went so far as to say that to the starving God can appear only as bread and butter. "For the poor the economic is the spiritual."¹⁰⁶ Talk to them of modern progress. Insult them by taking the name of God before them in vain. They will call you and me fiends if we talk about God to them. They know, if they know any God at all, a God of terror, vengeance, a pitiless tyrant."¹⁰⁷ Nobody did more than he, in his own way, to provide to the masses a little more of the material means of life. Only he refused to make the multiplication of material

wants the sole criterion of progress, or to put the material before the moral when there was a conflict between the two.

As with the economic so with the technological. Life in a highly modern city depends upon a series of vital services. The failure of any one of these can make the people in their homes feel as helpless as a rat in a poisoned hole and, unless quickly restored, turn the whole city into a sepulchre. The failure of electric power would plunge every home in darkness. Telephones, transport, elevators, lifts, milk and food supplies, even water supply and air circulation, would suddenly collapse. Stuart Chase's grim picture is not overdrawn: "Some day an embittered labour movement, or even a small key labour group, may really cut a nerve. Some day a struggle between two business groups may cut a nerve. Some day an earthquake may cut a lot of them—a quake which would not do appreciable damage in a village."¹⁰⁸ "Who understands the technological functioning of these services, and their interlocking relationships?" he asks, "where are the men . . . where is the central intelligence to nurse a great city through a nervous breakdown?" and answers: "Nowhere. . . . The problems involved are far too complicated to be grasped by any one mind, or by any small group."¹⁰⁹ The number of men required to paralyse the life of a whole city, we are told on good authority, need not exceed "a minute fraction of one per cent. of the population."¹¹⁰ Growing specialisation, and dependence upon electric power, imported fuels and imported food-stuffs are fast destroying the community self-sufficiency even in the countryside, and with that the capacity of the common man to stand up for his democratic rights. There can be no real freedom of choice or of action where so many subsist on the sufferance of so few.

The structure of democracy and peace cannot be raised on a foundation of such economic and technological tenuousness. Nations that depend upon food supplies from outside, live under the constant fear that their life-lines might be severed by some unfriendly foreign power. This creates among the people a feeling of insecurity, a psychology of fear which dictators and war-mongers can in a crisis easily exploit to create mass hysteria so that jettisoning their long cherished ideals the people become willing to sacrifice their personal freedom to wartime totalitarian efficiency and allow themselves to be led to slaughter and to be slaughtered like robots. Advance of technology has thus actually resulted in a decline of individual freedom. The average individual, confronted with the choice between the loss of individual or national security and semi-servitude, for the most part chooses the latter. And so, in the words of Aldous Huxley, "On many fronts nature has been conquered; but . . . man and his liberties have sustained a succession of defeats."¹¹¹

In the final resort, the only sure guarantee of a people's liberties

is their capacity to resist injustice and wrong. "Only the most ingeniously optimistic, the most wilfully blind to the facts of history and psychology," observes Aldous Huxley, "can believe that paper guarantees of liberty—guarantees wholly unsupported by the realities of political and economic power—will be scrupulously respected by those who have known only the facts of Governmental omnipotence on the one hand and, on the other, of mass dependence upon, and consequently subservience to, the State and its representatives."¹¹² The real test of independence, said Gandhiji, was that the common man should have "the consciousness . . . that he is the maker of his own destiny."¹¹³ Real independence would come not "by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused . . . by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority."¹¹⁴

Traditional democracy recognises the inherent right of the people even to violent rebellion against authority when the democratic machinery is abused. But advance of technology has put in the hands of small groups and bodies of men a terrific concentration of power. Those who control the machinery of the State are consequently today armed with far more effective instruments of coercion with which to put down popular resistance than their predecessors ever had before. They also control all the means of mass communication—the Press, the radio and the cinema, by which to hypnotise the masses and condition their thinking. The people have nothing comparable at their disposal with which to counter these. Such sanctions as they once had have been rendered obsolete and ineffective by the march of technology.

As a result, where democratic machinery is non-existent or may have been suppressed or otherwise broken down, the people are left without any effective mode of redress. Their only hope lies in the possibility of offering resistance on a plane where technological superiority does not count. This can only be by non-violent resistance or Satyagraha. "The British have arms," Gandhiji once said, "while we have not. We must, therefore, give fight on a plane where we can use our weapons while they cannot" i.e. by non-violent non-cooperation and Satyagraha. But one pre-condition of successful Satyagraha by the people at large—apart from the cultivation of the basic spiritual disciplines by the leaders of Satyagraha and non-violent organisation of the rank and file by intelligent, purposive and consciously directed constructive activity—is that at least a fair number of them should be able to eke out a subsistence, without depending upon big capitalists, big employers or "the all-embracing employer — the State." This requires that they should have free access to the land and be possessed of many skills so that in a crisis they will not be coerced into submission for lack of the means of livelihood for themselves and their dependents.

Gandhiji, therefore, advocated a return to spiritual values, a

radical simplification of the mechanics of living and reorganisation of society on the basis of small, manageable, autonomous units in which rural communities, regionally self-sufficient in respect of their basic needs, would wield effective political power. "It is in regionalism," observes Wilfred Wellock, "that man is destined to realise his maximum freedom. Regionalism has indeed become an urgent necessity, and indispensable condition of achieving and maintaining individual freedom and a human society."¹¹⁵ "My idea of village Swaraj," wrote Gandhiji,

is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. . . . Then if there is more land available, it will grow *useful* money crops, thus excluding *ganja*, tobacco, opium and the like. . . . As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the cooperative basis. . . . Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-cooperation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village. The Government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. . . . Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own Government. The law of non-violence rules him and his Government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour.¹¹⁶

This, however, does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. "It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces."¹¹⁷

In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore *the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. . . . No-one . . . (will) be the first and none the last.*¹¹⁸ (Italics mine).

Such a society, maintained Gandhiji, "is necessarily highly cultured."¹¹⁹ In it "every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no-one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour."¹²⁰

Finally, this society "must naturally be based on truth and non-violence which . . . are not possible without living belief in God, meaning a self-existent, all-knowing living Force which inheres every other force known to the world and which depends on none and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act."¹²¹

G. D. H. Cole is credited with having once made the remark that he doubted whether the common man in England was capable of maintaining effective democracy in any unit larger than a parish or an urban district council. If we are to have any kind of human rule, observes Lord Northbourne, to preserve individual freedom, not to lose it, it can only be based on the existence of "small, manageable, sound primary units, in themselves coherent and self-contained, which can be built up into large units, in their turn coherent and self-contained."¹²²

A dynamic democracy can grow only out of meaningful relationships and spontaneous organisation that spring up among the people, when they come together at the local level to solve their basic problems by cooperation among themselves. In such a community achievement of self-sufficiency and security by neighbourly cooperation engenders a strong sense of local strength and solidarity, and the individual's sense of responsibility to the community and concern for its welfare are at their highest. "Concern for large scale affairs on the regional or national and international levels by individuals and groups cannot be vital and lasting," points out Clyde E. Murry, an American expert on community development, "unless it is based on active participation in local problems. If the people are apathetic and are not closely related to one another on the local levels, it is well-nigh impossible to have a dynamic democracy on the broader scene."¹²³

The foundations of democracy are today crumbling under the impact of applied technology. If democracy is to survive the challenge with which it is faced and not to go under, its foundations must be re-established. These foundations are (1) a conscious recovery of individuality and "the recognising of the body by a mind repossessed of vision", (2) a social environment readjusted to man's measure, in which human personality shall find full expression, and (3) an intellectual

understanding of the universal in the framework of man's relationships with other forms of life both animate and inanimate.

The framework appropriate to the capacity of the individual, observes Albert Gleizes, "the framework in which the '*common man*' is not submerged and can take an interest in the part assigned to him because it gives scope for initiative and personal influence, is '*the village*'. . . . This is the legitimate Fatherland . . . non-aggressive and suited to the stature of normal man." For this reason, he tells us, "it is the imperative duty of the elect to recreate the village in body and soul."¹²⁴

9

Would this not mean a rejection of technology and fruits of progress? "You would not industrialise India?" Gandhiji was once asked.

He replied: "I would, indeed, in my sense of the term."

"You would then go back to the natural economy?"

"Yes. . . . But I am industrialising the village in a different way."¹²⁵

What would be the place of the machine in this? "I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all," said Gandhiji.¹²⁶ "Every machine that helps every individual has a place."¹²⁷ But there would be no place in this for machines that would displace human labour and concentrate power in a few hands. "Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family."¹²⁸

What he objected to was not machinery as such but its indiscriminate multiplication. He refused to be dazzled by "the seeming triumph of machinery. . . . Simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the millions of cottagers, I should welcome."¹²⁹

In other words, as he once explained to a young inquirer, it was "the craze for machinery" to which he was opposed. "The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. . . . I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all; I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might."¹³⁰

"Then you are fighting not against machinery as such but against its abuses which are so much in evidence today?" he was questioned.

"I would unhesitatingly say 'yes', " he replied, "but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be mere

instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be over-worked and machinery instead of becoming a hindrance will be a help. I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery, but its limitation."¹³¹

In answer to a further question whether logically argued out, this would not seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go, he admitted that it might have to go. "But I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man. . . . The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian considerations, and not greed, the motive."¹³²

Profit-making and human exploitation being eliminated, Gandhiji said, people would be free to introduce such machines as might be necessary to make the village community self-contained and to increase production, provided it was "mainly for use" and not for exploitation of others. So long as this condition was adhered to, "there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use."¹³³ He would make "intelligent exceptions". Take for instance the Singer sewing machine. "It is one of the few useful things ever invented. . . . Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the sewing machine. . . . He . . . saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine."¹³⁴ Similarly, printing presses would continue, and we would need bicycles and surgical instruments. "How can one make them with one's hands? Heavy machinery would be needed for them."¹³⁵ Similarly, the "heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour" would have its "inevitable place".¹³⁶ But he was "socialist enough", said Gandhiji to insist that all such heavy industries employing large numbers of people should be "nationalised or State-controlled" and worked for the benefit of the people "under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity."¹³⁷

The level of machinery and organisation that the community might adopt in such society would vary from time to time and from place to place according to the varying needs of the people, the standard of living aimed at and changing circumstances. The guiding principle would always be that the introduction of costly and complicated machines or processes must not impair the self-sufficiency of the community and they should be within the mental reach and comprehension of the people. The machines should further be within their financial capacity to own individually or collectively.

Hardly less important than self-sufficiency in food is regional self-sufficiency in respect of power. As Aldous Huxley has pointed out,

the discovery of new sources of unlimited power involving a terrific capital outlay or the use of raw materials to which only a few can have access would, instead of making for democracy, liberty and peace, only accentuate the already existing international rivalries and domination of the weak by the strong, as illustrated by the big powers' race for oil and the ugly portent of "oil diplomacy" in the Middle East. Nuclear energy would make matters still worse.

Being myself very much taken up with the idea of the electrification of the villages, I tried several times during our last detention in Poona to canvass Gandhiji's support for electrification. If electricity could be made equally available in every cottage, Gandhiji had said before, in theory at least there would be no objection to the village industries being run by electricity. "But then the village communities or the State would own power-houses, just as they have their grazing pastures."¹³⁸ Agriculture stood on a different footing. For reasons already explained and more to follow power-driven machinery can have very little use, if any, in agriculture under the economy of permanence. It seems, however, that Gandhiji regarded the proviso which he had attached to his assent as a "counsel of perfection". I never could get him to enthuse over the idea of electrification. He attached the utmost importance to the conditions with which he had hedged his assent, he said, and was afraid that they would conveniently be ignored by the enthusiasts for electricity. Perhaps he also felt that once electricity obtained a foothold in the villages, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to confine its use within any pre-set limit. For instance, if electricity was used for lighting and cooking, why not for irrigation, for grinding corn, for husking rice, or for pressing oil from the oil seeds? Again, could electrification of five hundred thousand villages of India be achieved without bringing in all-round heavy industrialisation and without the whole economy of the self-contained village being affected? The utmost that with all my pleadings I could get him to concede was that it was for those who had faith in electrification to remove his misgivings and demonstrate that the electrification of the villages could be effected without the weakest going to the wall. So far as he was concerned he had more than enough to do, he said, with the things that he had already on hand.

The natural tendency in a society from which exploitation and profiteering have been eliminated would be, said Gandhiji, *to substitute handicrafts for machinery for whatever can be done better by hand and gives to the worker a healthy and satisfying form of an occupation*. There is practically no limit to the development of higher skills latent in the human hand, or to increasing the efficiency of implements in use, to step up production. Even a minute increment in individual production secured in this way when multiplied millions of times would mean a far greater net increase in the national wealth than what

could be obtained by spending millions in the erection of colossal power plants. If, after all human and cattle labour has been fully utilised, something more remains to be done, it would be open to the people to use mechanical power to the extent that they felt necessary. Suppose, for instance, a village community or a group of villages wanted to build a road, a dam, or a reservoir, or to do contour bunding for soil conservation, it would be open to them to consider whether or what machinery or labour-saving devices they would use to set free labour needed for the completion of the works in question. The essential condition is that the people themselves should decide.

The natural order of preference in this set up would be to utilise in the first place the energy of the wind, the water, the tides and the sunshine. Imported electric or fuel power would be used only in the last resort. Thus they would freely use sewage gas prepared from human and animal waste, if this could be economically done in the villages, and solar cookers, solar batteries, wind mills and water-mills, provided they served to supplement and did not displace human and cattle labour, or tend to increase the dependence of the village on the town.

Agriculture in this set up will go hand in hand with industry. Such products of the village as enter into the daily consumption of the villagers or are needed for their cottage crafts will be processed in the village itself; the surplus alone being sent out to the cities in exchange for services and goods on a fair and equitable basis. Cities will serve as emporia for village products instead of the villages being used as a dumping ground for the manufactured goods of the cities. Machines will not be abolished. On the contrary, the people will have many more of them. But these machines will be simple machines which the people can themselves operate and own individually or collectively. Society will be composed of small manageable units, co-operatively knit together. It will be a world which the common man can understand and therefore effectively control. The frontiers of this little world might be narrower but the bounds of freedom will be enlarged. Commerce and industry in this set up will be ancillary to agriculture instead of agriculture being ancillary to them.

“As a moderately intelligent man,” Gandhiji once remarked clarifying his attitude on the use of science and machinery, “I know that man cannot live without industry. Therefore, I cannot be opposed to industrialisation. But I have a great concern about introducing machine industry. The machine produces much too fast, and brings with it a sort of economic system which I cannot grasp. I do not want to accept something when I see its evil effects which outweigh whatever good it brings with it. *I want the dumb millions of our land to be healthy and happy, and I want them to grow spiritually. As yet for this purpose we do not need the machine.* There are many, too many idle

hands. But as we grow in understanding, if we feel the need of machines, we certainly will have them. We want industry, let us become industrious. Let us become more self-dependent, then we will not follow the other people's lead so much. We shall introduce machines if and when we need them. Once we have shaped our life on Ahimsa, we shall know how to control the machine."¹³⁹ (*Italics mine*).

During his visit to England in 1931, at the end of a series of searching questions by an American Press correspondent, Gandhiji was asked: "So you are opposed to machinery only because and when it concentrates production and distribution in the hands of the few?"

"You are right," answered Gandhiji. "I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me. That is all."¹⁴⁰

Modern science has two aspects—the educative or fundamental and the economic or the technological. In its fundamental aspect, science has been an educative and liberating force, which has set free truth from the shackles of dogma. This aspect of science Gandhiji personified as perhaps no other living person. None strove harder than he to cultivate that intellectual integrity, that habit of dispassionate inquiry into and search for objective truth—as against a fanatical assertion of the truth of one's own dogma—which the discipline of science demands, or to inculcate on the people at large the habit of a scientific approach to every thing in life. He described the spinning-wheel as "science reduced to the terms of the masses". In its economic aspect, he looked upon it as the means *par excellence* of overcoming the mental inertia of the masses and of quickening their intelligence and inventive faculty. At the beginning of the non-cooperation movement, when millions had taken to the spinning-wheel and the allied processes, and everybody from the oldest village dame to the tiniest tot plying his *Takli* or carding bow, was busy thinking how to improve them, he once exultantly remarked: "Never has the spirit of invention been more briskly at work among the common people than now." I can never forget how his whole countenance beamed and his eyes glistened as he uttered that remark.

Henry Ford, in his personal memoir *My Life and Work*, has recorded how once when he received an order for tractors from one country, he sent trucks instead. "It was to make the people speed-minded," he explained. Once they became time conscious, he could count upon their wanting many more tractors. And the result proved that he was right. In the wake of the trucks came a much bigger order for tractors than he had originally received. It was Gandhiji's anticipation that the resuscitation of the spinning-wheel with all that it implies would inaugurate a new revolution in technology which would give birth to a series of inventions as marvellous as those that made the industrial revolution but of a different order. They would

reverse the evil effects of the industrial revolution.

Suppose, observes Aldous Huxley, it becomes the acknowledged purpose of inventors and engineers to use applied science to provide the common folk with the means of "doing profitable and intrinsically significant work, of helping men and women to achieve independence from bosses, so that they may become their own employers, or members of a self-governing, cooperative group working for subsistence and a local market." Backed by appropriate legislation, "this differently orientated technological progress" would result in "a progressive decentralisation of population, of accessibility of land, of ownership of the means of production, of political and economic power." In addition there would be "the social advantages of a more humanly satisfying life for more people, a greater measure of genuine self-governing democracy and a blessed freedom from the silly or pernicious adult education provided by the mass producers of consumer goods through the medium of advertisements."¹⁴¹ Science too would gain thereby. Scientific progress is hindered when science is commercialised.

Science and technology have hitherto been used by and large to subserve the interest of entrenched power—big industry, big finance, the sophisticated town folk. The villager—the peasant, the handicraftsman and the artisan—has benefited by it only incidentally. It was Gandhiji's aim to bring down science and technology from the mountain tops to the plains where common folk dwell so as to give to the masses—the small producer, the breaker of the soil and the handicraftsman plying his craft in his cottage their full benefit.

10

Ever since the shift of emphasis in the Congress from non-violent direct action to "political activity", Gandhiji had noted with deep concern the growing dominance of the town over the village. Real India, he had again and again proclaimed, was to be found "not in its few cities but in its seven hundred thousand villages. But we . . . town-dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister to our needs."¹⁴²

The villager had suffered long from neglect by those who had the benefit of education. The intelligentsia had chosen city-life. The town-dweller had "generally exploited the villager, in fact he has lived on the poor villager's subsistence."¹⁴³ Once India's villages produced and supplied to the Indian towns and cities all their wants. "India became impoverished when our cities became foreign markets and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands."¹⁴⁴

It had become the fashion to dub the villager as "ignorant and narrow-minded". Gandhiji challenged those who talked like that to go and live on the diet on which millions of villagers live. "We should not expect to survive it longer than a month or should be afraid of losing our mental faculties."¹⁴⁵ And yet the villager went through that state day after day and year after year. The only way in which the intelligentsia could expiate for the grievous wrong they had done to the villager by their past neglect, said Gandhiji, was by encouraging the villagers to revive their lost industries and arts by assuring them of a ready market. "Only when the cities realise the duty of making an adequate return to the villages for the strength and sustenance which they derive from them, instead of selfishly exploiting them, that a healthy and moral relationship between the two will spring up."¹⁴⁶

Industrialism has in the past depended upon its ability to exploit sources of cheap raw materials, and foreign markets to dispose of the surplus of manufactured goods in the absence of competitors.¹⁴⁷ It was all very well at the beginning of the race for industrialism for countries that had a running start to aspire to become the workshop of the world. But with rapid awakening coming over all parts of the world, growing trade rivalries and the rise of their own home industries in one country after another, Gandhiji warned, this would not be found to be so easy by the new entrants who would find themselves up against old established rivals in the race for industrialisation. Anyway, for a country like India, where the problem was not how to find leisure for the teeming millions in her villages but how to utilise their idle hours, there was no need to industrialise:

Why must India become industrial in the Western sense? The Western civilisation is urban. Small countries like England or Italy may afford to urbanise their systems. A big country like America with very sparse population, perhaps, cannot do otherwise. But one would think that a big country, with a teeming population with an ancient rural tradition which has hitherto answered its purpose, need not, must not copy the Western model. What is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good for another differently situated. One man's food is often another man's poison. . . . Mechanisation is good when hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil where there are more hands than required for the work as is the case in India.¹⁴⁸

Gandhiji was afraid that India, if she became heavily industrialised, would inevitably be driven to exploitation and become a "curse for other nations, a menace to the world".¹⁴⁹ The tendency to

over-production is inherent in the industrial system. The more highly developed a machine and costlier to instal, the greater is the compulsion to utilise its full potential for production, irrespective of demand. For even if it is kept idle, the interest on the huge capital outlay continues to accumulate. The industry must, therefore, either under-sell, or find fresh markets to dispose of the surplus. Trade rivalries and struggle for markets resulting from this lead to international conflict and expansionism. The flag follows the trade. Ultimately a country's foreign policy is determined not by the ideals it blazons or the slogans it shouts but by the inexorable logic of its production system. "God forbid," exclaimed Gandhiji, "that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom (England) is today keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts."¹⁵⁰

And what applies to India applies equally to the other densely populated countries of the world.

It has sometimes been argued that it is not industrialism but the capitalistic system that is the cause of exploitation. Under a socialistic economy, industrialisation would be used only for the service of the masses—to emancipate them from the slavery of toil—not for exploitation of anybody. Gandhiji did not share that view. "Pandit Nehru wants industrialisation," he remarked, "because he thinks that if it is socialised, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialisation can eradicate them."¹⁵¹

Today we find highly industrialised States—whether capitalist, Socialist, or Communist—all vying with one another in extending their industrial domain. Under capitalism and Socialism this takes the form of "economic imperialism", colonialism, and acquisition of "dependencies" and "mandated territory", under Communism it comes under the guise of "satellite States". In fact there is no form of exploitation so ruthless and more to be dreaded than exploitation of a country by the whole working class of another in pursuit of a higher standard of living. "You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilisation," warned Gandhiji, "but it can be built on self-contained villages. . . . Rural economy, as I have conceived it, eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have, therefore, to be rural-minded before you can be non-violent, and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning-wheel."¹⁵² And again: "Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence."¹⁵³

After a long discussion with Gandhiji on the subject of village

industries a Polish friend remarked: "Gandhiji is more radical than Socialists. They are against the worker being exploited; Gandhiji is not only against this, but also against the worker exploiting others."¹⁵⁴

In the place of industrialisation Gandhiji wanted India to evolve a system of economy based on what he called "non-violent occupations". A non-violent occupation he defined as that occupation which is "fundamentally free from violence" and which involves "no exploitation or envy of others".¹⁵⁵ There was a time, he believed, when Indian village economics were based on non-violent occupations. Those who engaged in such occupations did earn their living but the essential basis of these occupations was service of society. The emphasis was not on rights but on duties. In other words, the service motive rather than the profit motive was the basis of society. (See Vol. I, page 548). Body labour was at the core of these occupations and there was no large-scale machinery. This system of economy was essentially non-exploiting. "For when a man is content to own only so much land as he can till with his own labour, he cannot exploit others. Handicrafts exclude exploitation and slavery."¹⁵⁶

There could be injustice even in this system but it could be "reduced to a minimum. . . . There was more lustre in people's eyes, and more life in their limbs. . . . It was a life founded on unconscious Ahimsa."¹⁵⁷ "It was very crude," Gandhiji admits. "I know that there was in it no non-violence of my definition and conception. But the germ was there." The "nearest approach to civilisation based upon non-violence" was, he maintained, "the erstwhile village republic of India."¹⁵⁸

Gandhiji defined the Swaraj of his dreams as a Swaraj in which the necessities of life would be enjoyed by the poor "in common with those enjoyed by the Princes and moneyed men."¹⁵⁹ This did not mean, he explained, that they should have "palaces" like the Princes. "They are not necessary for happiness. You or I would be lost in them. But you ought to get all the ordinary amenities of life that a rich man enjoys."¹⁶⁰ As the old homely English saying goes, "Enough is as good as a feast." Gandhiji wanted the constitution for India and for that matter for the whole world to be such that "no-one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet."¹⁶¹ And this ideal, he held, can be universally realised "*only if the means of production of elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are, or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others.*"¹⁶² (Italics mine).

This was the socialistic pattern of society—not in blind imitation of the West, but in accordance with India's ancient tradition and culture and suited to the temperament and genius of her people—which

Gandhiji wanted India to realise.¹⁶³ And it was his firm view that, so far at least as India was concerned, there was no quicker way of realising this in the immediate future without the sacrifice of democratic values than a decentralised social and economic order based upon autonomous village communities of peasant-craftsmen, enjoying regional self-sufficiency in respect of their basic needs such as once obtained in our country.

11

Democracy is a plant of slow growth. It needs patience, peace, stability and staying power. Translated in terms of the millions, its essential ingredients are food, clothing, shelter, health and individual freedom. Mere political democracy without economic independence and equal distribution can only prove a snare and an illusion.

To take up food first, in spite of all the wonderful discoveries that have been made in the science of agriculture—labour-saving machines which enable one person to do the work of many, new fertilisers, and insecticides, and new and hardier strains of crops which thrive on soils and in climates that were formerly considered to be too uncongenial—our food supplies are not keeping pace with the increasing population taken the world over, and the danger of world starvation can by no means be dismissed.

Population control is undoubtedly the ultimate solution.¹⁶⁴ But whatever may be the method of choice for population control, one thing is clear. It must go hand in hand with a system of economy that would enable the maximum population to be maintained on the available acreage in health and reasonable comfort for the longest period of time without impairment of soil fertility. It can be shown that the system that is best suited for this is that of intensive individual farming based on cattle and human economy as a way of life, supplemented by cottage industries, as against large-scale, collective, mechanised farming ancillary to heavy industrialisation.

In agriculture, observes F. Baade, "if only because production is bound to the soil, large-scale undertakings can never acquire the same superiority as in industry."¹⁶⁵ The small undertaking possesses certain advantages which the large one lacks. For instance, on a large farm paid labour is more expensive and difficult to supervise. The achievements of the large undertaking "can for the most part be made quite readily available also for the peasant farm."¹⁶⁶ Contrary to what Marx thought, therefore, the balance of advantage in regard to "scientific prolific cultivation" lies not with the "capitalist farmer" but the small holder engaged in family farming. "Whenever it is a question of intensive farming, of personal care of animals, and so on, large-scale

undertakings dependent on paid labour must always find it difficult to compete with peasant production in a free market."¹⁶⁷ That is why, F. Baade concludes, the "demand for family farming has continued unabated even in the West."¹⁶⁸

The same is borne out by the data for Chinese intensive agriculture given in John Lossing Buck's *Land Utilisation in China*. Although the return from the land, Buck points out, begins to diminish when the size of the farm is below 4 or 5 acres, the total yield continues to increase even after that until the size of the holding touches 2.6 acres. After that it begins gradually to diminish.¹⁶⁹ But even when the size of holdings falls below that mark, "the decrease in yield per acre, and hence in total yield, is less than the drop in production per man." The peasant, therefore, still finds it worthwhile to stick to the land. In a densely populated country, therefore, it is advantageous to adopt subsistence farming as a way of life and work the land "intensively, even far down the scale of diminishing returns, in order to provide enough . . . food for the entire population."¹⁷⁰

Prince Kropotkin has in his *Fields, Factories and Workshops* showed, on the basis of experiments which he himself had conducted, what unbelievable results could be achieved by individual, intensive, small-scale agriculture. F. H. King, the great American authority on agricultural physics and soil management has similarly recorded in his *Farmers of Forty Centuries* how in China, Korea and Japan conservative economy in agriculture had made it possible after twenty and perhaps thirty or even forty centuries for their soils "to produce sufficiently for the maintenance of such dense populations as are living now in these countries." Almost every day, he tells us, he and his colleagues were "instructed, surprised and amazed" at the conditions and practices which confronted them whichever way they turned; "instructed in ways and extent to which these nations for centuries have been and are conserving and utilising their natural resources, surprised at the magnitude of the returns they are getting from their fields."¹⁷¹

And these are the practices they found in vogue: "Both soil and sub-soil are carried into the villages and there between the intervals when needed, they are, at the expense of great labour, composted with organic refuse and often afterwards dried and pulverised before being carried back and used on the fields as home-made fertilisers. Manure of all kinds, human and animal, is religiously saved and supplied to the fields in a manner which secures an efficiency far above our own practices." With regard to the economic value of this human waste, King wrote: "The International Concession of the City of Shanghai in 1908 sold to a Chinese contractor the privilege of entering residences and public places early in the morning of each day in the year and removing the night-soil, receiving therefor more than \$31,000 gold, for 78,000 tons of waste."

The total manureal value of the night-soil in India has been calculated at 230 crores of rupees. India's enormous cattle wealth was similarly estimated to yield 900 crores worth of manure annually. Even if 25 per cent. of this could be conserved, the total manure recoverable from the human and animal waste in India would be worth 280 crores of rupees.

Given a proper land system,¹⁷² said Gandhiji, conservative subsistence farming could enable us to maintain out of our own resources all our population even with the present rate of increase for a good long time to come, provided we were prepared to forego for the time being some of the trimmings of "progress" and to put first things first. He accordingly made the proper disposal of night-soil by composting the foundation of his reconstruction schemes beginning with his Ashram. The erection of trench or pit latrines and scavenging was an essential part of the daily Ashram routine and of the apprenticeship which every novice went through.

Large-scale, mechanised, monoculture with the help of artificial fertilisers brings down paper costs. It makes procurement easy and enables it to be increased to capacity. Under it the yield per worker employed on the land goes up. A subsistence farmer, on the other hand, pays individual attention to each plant according to its need like a gardener. The machine cannot do that. It cannot discriminate. The maximum yield per unit the area under subsistence farming is, therefore, higher than under any other system¹⁷³ and higher by far when measured in terms of the primary well-being of the common man—the health and vitality it confers on the workers engaged in it and to the population it serves. One is exploitative, the other conservative. One makes for quick superficial abundance followed by rapid exhaustion of the soil, the other for stability and permanence.

In the alternative, suppose half the population were withdrawn from the land and employed in industry to relieve the pressure on the land. The production from the land, according to the data of Elmer Pendell, would be only about 68 per cent. of what it was when the farm holdings were 5.5 acres per man. The result would be that if the ratio of population to food were such that 68 per cent. would satisfactorily feed the whole population, rural and industrial combined, the plan would work out well, "assuming that the factory products could be sold year after year." But if 68 per cent. were not enough to go round for the entire population, it would mean starvation for everybody concerned unless "the industrial products of the factories could be used to buy food from other countries."¹⁷⁴ The chances for this, however, are precarious. Apart from the uncertainty of being able to sell manufactured goods in foreign markets in the face of growing competition, the food supplies from surplus producing countries available for export are fast decreasing owing to the continuous natural increase in

the world's population. To adopt the expedient of rapid industrialisation for reducing the pressure on the land and increasing the people's standard of living would thus be a hazardous gamble to say the least.

It will thus be seen that intensive, small-scale, diversified farming as a way of life, supported by supplementary cottage crafts is the most reliable and most effective way of feeding and maintaining in health the maximum population on land. It alone can consummate "a marriage between industry and agriculture", provide the diversification of occupations that India needs so that agriculture does not become a "gamble in the monsoon", and weld the producer and the consumer into a common association instead of their being banded into unions with conflicting interests, as happens when agriculture is sought to be propped up by such palliatives alone as agricultural cooperatives, rural credit, and marketing facilities. But procurement under this system is not so easy and it is not suited to bulk handling of the produce for commercial purposes. There is also under it the possibility of fierce resistance by the peasantry if there is tactless or undue interference with their way of life in pursuance of preconceived theories, or if they are given a raw deal to favour the urban at the cost of the agrarian. Naturally, this system is not popular with money-hungry professional planners and advocates of controlled economy.

12

As an integral part of subsistence farming based on cattle and human economy is the question of handicrafts and supplementary cottage industries. Farming is not a self-sufficient occupation anywhere. Subsistence farming cannot engage the cultivator and his family all the year round. It needs supplementary cottage occupations to sustain it. In a country like ours, further, where agriculture and health of the soil depend upon the maintenance of a proper balance between the cattle population and the human population, preservation of the cattle wealth becomes a basic need. And in order that this may be economically feasible, both human and cattle population have to be multi-purpose. The alternative is to slaughter the cattle as soon as they otherwise become uneconomical to keep. This the prevailing religious sentiment in this country will not permit. The cattle that turn the soil must, therefore, also fertilise it; and when they are not engaged in agriculture, thrash and grind the corn, turn the oil-presses, lift the sub-soil water, and provide transport. Similarly, the human population must engage in processing their field produce, and practise handicrafts and other cottage occupations when they are not engaged in agriculture. This, if intelligently done, said Gandhiji, would also develop their mental faculties so that in the constant company of the oxen, they would not

grow up into the likeness of Markham's "brother to the ox".

This in its turn means that both human and cattle population in the villages must be protected from the competition of mechanical power. Cattle economy cannot survive the invasion of the farm by the tractor, the Diesel engine or the electric pump.

Let us take the next necessary of life—clothing—which, in spite of mills, has remained unsolved. In 1951 the cloth available per annum in India was 11.5 yards per head and the utmost the Planning Commission could promise was that they would give 15 yards of cloth per annum at the end of their first five year plan, and 18 yards per annum at the end of the second five year plan. Now, 20 seers of ginned cotton or 70 seers of un-ginned cotton are calculated to give from 480 to 512 standard hanks of yarn of 840 yards each in 1,460 man-hours. Each member in a family of five, by spending 48 minutes daily, or the whole family giving four hours daily collectively to spinning and ancillary processes, can thus produce enough yarn to be woven into 121 square yards of cloth. This will give per head 24 yards of cloth per annum.

Nor is this a mere theoretical calculation. The 7th grade children of about 14 years of age in the Sevagram Basic School produced 60 square yards of cloth in 947 man-hours (including all the processes from the cleaning of cotton to the production of finished cloth). In other words, if the quota of 15 yards per head is prepared at home, a family of 5 will have to give 3 hours and 45 minutes or each individual 45 minutes daily. Gandhiji, therefore, made spinning and the allied processes the foundation of his system of Basic Education and further laid down that a minimum measure of "sacrificial spinning" should be regarded as a daily must in which every citizen of India should engage as a matter of national duty, even as swimming is in England.

Simplicity is the essence of universality. The outstanding merit of Gandhiji's solution of India's basic problems of food and clothing is its elemental simplicity. It involves almost negligible capital cost, as such costs go. The quotient of efficiency, i.e. the ratio of production to capital cost in the case of the spinning-wheel is higher by far than in the case of a textile mill. Every man, woman and child, even the sick and the decrepit, can engage in spinning after a short training. Production can, therefore, be increased so as to keep pace with the growing numbers almost indefinitely. Further, the hand process enables higher counts to be spun from inferior grades of cotton. As these varieties of cotton are more prolific in their yield, more acreage can be utilised for food production. The bulk of the cotton needed by the spinners can be grown by themselves in their own cottage yards or in the neglected nooks and corners of the village and its environs. Similarly, odd moments of spare time interspersed with domestic and other chores, which would otherwise be lost, can be turned to account in this way. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to other handicrafts.

Scientists tell us that if a method could be discovered of economical extraction of the infinitesimal percentage of gold that is present in the sea water, the precious metal thus recovered would exceed many times the entire supply from all the gold mines in the world. Similarly, said Gandhiji, if the full potential of the infinitesimals in the form of minute bits of unutilised time and labour of the millions, and of neglected resources that were within almost everybody's reach were fully utilised, the result in terms of the well-being of the masses would far exceed what any Government or organisation could achieve even by the most ambitious and costliest of its schemes. Take subsistence farming based on human and cattle economy. As Lord Northbourne put it: "Though the value of each separate bit of wastage . . . is infinitesimal, the aggregate of all must be gigantic. To anyone whose eyes are opened the contemplation of this unceasing leakage, day after day and year after year, is distressing and alarming. On the other hand, the collection and skilful conversion to use and beauty of these seemingly unimportant materials is a most fascinating and satisfactory pursuit. Responsible authorities, national and local, are important. But the ordinary individual is more so. . . . He can stop the tiny leaks, which together are more important probably even than the big ones. More than this — any little plot can become a centre of renewed vitality which can act as a nucleus for the extension of influence to neighbouring areas. And on the small scale the deadening influence of monetary considerations can usually be kept at bay."¹⁷⁵

There was no quicker way, Gandhiji maintained, of providing to the millions of India the means of healthy subsistence, which was the question of questions before them but which had all along remained unsolved, than to arm them with the necessary tools and techniques and enable them to do it themselves by utilising the infinitesimals. Herein lies the revolutionary significance of Gandhiji's method. Organised industry, ruled as it is by commercial considerations, cannot do this. And yet it makes a tremendous difference in the sum when millions upon millions do it together.

During one of his visits to the Kolar Gold Fields, Gandhiji was once shown mounds of gold-bearing clay that had grown sky-high because the percentage of the residuary gold in the clay was considered to be too low for economical extraction by methods hitherto known. But a new process had recently been discovered which made this possible and so the clay was being shovelled back into a series of wells for the recovery of the precious metal. It ushered in a revolution in the technology of gold extraction.

Gandhiji's method of effectively utilising the latent power of the masses by the alchemy of non-violent organisation is as revolutionary in its implications as the Cyanide process for the recovery of residual gold from the gold-bearing clay.

Years ago, when he first started talking of the spinning-wheel, Gandhiji once observed in one of his prayer addresses, it was mainly as a means of supplementing the income of the poor cultivators and the village women. Later on he discovered the tremendous power hidden in the spinning-wheel. That power was the power of non-violence. If all men and women and children of age out of the forty crores of India plied the wheel, they would of course spin all the yarn required for the use of the millions and save crores of rupees. But that was in his eyes not of great consequence. The greatest thing he valued in it was "the power generated by the cooperative effort of these four hundred millions of people."¹⁷⁶

In the pursuit of his quest for the power of non-violence, Gandhiji had found that non-violence is best expressed through insignificant-looking little things. To achieve non-violent organisation of the people, therefore, he said, they had to concentrate upon and attain perfection in little things to the exclusion of big ones. They would then get big results. This required the popular leaders, officials and members of the ruling class to become truly the servants of the people. They had to renounce privilege and identify themselves with the masses whose representatives they claimed to be. Then alone would they be able to enter into the minds of the masses and the masses theirs. Out of it would be born the spontaneous mass cooperation that would make the miracle possible.

13

A host of eminent writers—Henry Maine, Munro, Elphinstone, Metcalfe and others—have left us a living pen-picture of India's ancient system of self-governing village communities. "Little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations"; "they contain in miniature all the materials of a State within themselves"; "almost sufficient to protect their members, if all other Governments are withdrawn"—these are some of the descriptions given of them.¹⁷⁷ It was this union of the village communities, "each one forming a separate State in itself," recorded Sir Charles Metcalfe, afterwards Governor-General of India, that had contributed "more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and it is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a greater portion of freedom and independence."

The soul of this system was the village council or Panchayat. The local Panchayat and the hereditary functionaries carried out public

works, looked after construction and repair of public buildings and wells, supervised tanks and water courses, education and sanitation. It gave to the village community "a solid basis of common life and purpose". They had poor law though unwritten.¹⁷⁸ Land was set aside for the purpose of poor relief, cesses were put on the artisans for their unfortunates and a part of the crops set aside for the poor. "Their life," a Western contemporary has testified after observing the system at work in some of the Indian villages where it still survives, "is built on common gain and common loss. When the crop of one land-owner is poor, all suffer. When the yield of the oil-presser is poor, they all lose. The very meaning of 'society' (the living and working relationships among men) is an inherent part of their knowledge. . . . I have felt that these village people have a deeper, more fundamental knowledge of society life than we do."¹⁷⁹

The village headman was responsible for the arrangement for watch and ward. The village watchman, his chief assistant, acted as the police within the village. Justice was administered on commonsense principle. There was no voting, no majority rule in the Panchayat; the people gathered together and talked and argued as in a family, until a "general associated opinion" emerged, which was accepted by all. On all accounts Panchayat justice was speedy, efficient and cheap. It discouraged litigation, helped settle disputes out of court by agreement among the parties themselves, which is the foundation and acid test of non-violent democracy, and fostered love of justice and the habit of truth-telling among the people. Sir William Sleeman, the British Resident at Lucknow, put on record his witness that whereas evidence in British courts was "fantastically unreliable" it was easy to get at the truth in a Panchayat. "There are no people in the world," he testified, "from whom it is more easy to get it (truth) in their own village communities where they state it before their relations, elders, and neighbours whose esteem is necessary to happiness and can be obtained only by an adherence to the truth."¹⁸⁰

It was the spirit of self-government which gave to the Indian village system its vitality. It made the village road, tank or well or canal "really alive" and the village folk, who built them by their initiative, cooperation and free, voluntary labour, to feel "a proprietary interest and pride" in it. As a result, we have it on record that in Madras Presidency alone, at one time, irrigation by small tanks and canals, which the villagers managed themselves, irrigated "collectively an area equal to that irrigated by all the larger works which have been constructed by the British Government in that Presidency."¹⁸¹

Here is a picture of "dynamic democracy" in action which enables the people "to devise their own solutions for the growing problems and changing patterns of life themselves." So strongly attached were the people to their way of life that, as Sir William Sleeman testified,

ninety-five per cent. of the people of Oudh were opposed to annexation by the British. "And this in spite of the fact that the ryots had been oppressed not a little by the Nawabs of Oudh, for the simple reason that the latter had never interfered with their village system."

When the British took over, they incorporated the Panchayat as a part of the British system and put a cess or tax to get done by paid labour the work which was formerly done by the voluntary labour of the villagers under their own Panchayat. This was contrary to the spirit of self-government. The Panchayat, as Gandhiji pointed out, can "function only under a law of its own making". It lost its roots when it derived its authority from the British laws instead of the will of the village community. Stripped of its real responsibility and power it lost its "function" and with that the village works and institutions theirs. They became neglected and uncared for. Education declined,¹⁸² villages became "dung heaps", malnutrition and epidemics became endemic. It was the same with poor relief, sanitation,¹⁸³ watch and ward and so on. They wilted and became corrupt when they were integrated with the British system of administration. "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds." The village watchman used to be a protector to the village in the true sense of the term, when the whole village shared the responsibility for the arrangement for internal and external security of the village. He became a petty oppressor, dreaded and detested by the villager when he became the agent of the police—and so he continues to be to this day.

Subsequent attempts by the British officials to revive these institutions as part of the governmental machine evoked little popular enthusiasm in spite of the backing by ample Government funds. Neither administrative efficiency nor the "cash nexus" could restore the vitality that spontaneous organisation gives when a self-sufficient and self-contained community conscious of its autonomous powers sets about to solve its problems by cooperation among its own members, untrammelled and unhampered by external authority.

In the heyday of its strength and vitality, before it fell upon evil times, this system insured to everybody a home, an honest occupation and means of healthy subsistence. It had its shortcomings and defects. It was weighed down by social evils like child marriage, caste, untouchability, ignorance, superstition and lack of a sense of corporate cleanliness. But they were not essential to it. It was Gandhiji's firm conviction that the self-governing village community about which Munro and others wrote was not defunct. It was capable of being resuscitated by re-creation of its self-governing powers and regional self-sufficiency. Thus regenerated, revitalised and purged of its evils, it could, with suitable modifications, meet all the present-day needs of democracy.

Practically all "rural reconstruction schemes" that one hears of these days devised by Governments, whether capitalist or Socialist, have one thing in common. They are all dominated by commercial considerations and therefore by money values. They provide palliatives; they do not touch the root of the problem. Take for instance, "marketing schemes". They operate as "concealed subsidies"; sometimes they become schemes for the restriction of production. Then there are "price-fixing machinery" and schemes for providing rural credit. Price-fixing inevitably leads to similar demands from powerful industrial interests and gives rise to a sort of a "political price war" in which the peasant finds himself up against, what a writer has called, "anti-rural" solidarity of urban elements—industry, commerce and the town proletariat—"at war with each other but at one against the non-organised or poorly organised peasants."¹⁸⁴ Their common slogan of "cheap bread" and low cost of living, puts them in the same cry against the farmers with the result that in the struggle for higher wages between capital and labour, it is the peasant and the rural population that suffers. Price-fixing policy can, besides, put the farmer at the mercy of the price-fixing authority which may "in effect become an agricultural dictatorship".¹⁸⁵ Nationalisation of land *per se* only enables the State or the regional authority to appropriate to itself the profits accruing from private ownership of land, and rural credit machinery substitutes an impersonal and therefore "inhuman and probably inefficient landlord (or banker) for one who is usually human and often efficient."¹⁸⁶ The same about rural credit facilities.¹⁸⁷ While helping the rural community to keep its head above water financially, they provide no immunity from exploitation. In fact they can be used, as they have been in the past, to further the exploitation of the villages. They cannot restore to the village community its springs of inner strength and vitality.

The essential distinction between the urban and the agrarian is that the urban has not that "inner linkage with the soil". He regards the soil and the commodities he handles as something that has to be turned into cash. They have only an indirect bearing on his life's upkeep. His thinking is in terms of money. The agrarian, on the other hand, is a producer in the primary sense, a "partner in the recreative power of the earth".¹⁸⁸ Farming with him is a way of life, a medium for the expression of life's values.

The peasantry derives vitality from the soil to the extent to which it lives out of and with the land it cultivates, with the minimum of intervention of money economy. A farmer, when he has to buy his

food and feed for his cattle and for his crops from the townsman, loses the essential advantage of his way of life. He becomes cut off from the springs of his vitality. Though he may still be living and working on the land, nutritionally he becomes an appendage of the town. And since he has less money to spend than the townsman, he may fare even worse. The townsman can anyway with his money still provide himself in some measure with what nature used to provide to the farmer free.

So long as the rural community is not effectively insulated from an economic system in which money rules, life is governed by false values and production is subordinated to commercial and business considerations, the agrarian cannot come into his own. Land must cease to be a commodity. Similarly labour and money must cease to be commodities, and the rural community must become biologically whole, self-contained and largely independent of money economy. In short, each regional unit should be able to produce for itself all the food supplies it needs for men, animals and crops.

The secret of the strength, stability and vitality of India's village communities was their independence of the modern monetary system. Direct exchange of products and services among themselves, and the fact that from within the borders of the village (or a group of villages) came most of the products on which its existence depended—its food, its clothing, its tools, even its currency—encouraged sharing and forged a living bond of unity and cohesion among the various sections. It made each village community a stronghold of democracy. This was undermined when the system of collection of dues *in cash by Government officials* was substituted for the traditional method of *payment in kind by the village through its own functionaries*.

When payment of land dues was in the form of a fixed share of the produce, it gave to the farmer automatic relief when his harvest was poor or when it failed. If production from the land fell the State's share of the receipts was reduced. The State was, therefore, directly interested in the yield from the land, year after year. That lessened the temptation on its part to put burdens upon the peasantry which could be met only by drawing upon soil capital.

Payment in kind depended upon things which the peasant himself cultivated and which therefore he could understand and control. But when he was made to pay in a substance which he himself did not produce, he became subject to "the unknown forces of unseen masters, who themselves controlled that substance."¹⁸⁹ Anything that takes the peasants away from the goods into the orbit of "variable, uncertain, and unfathomable abstraction, money, particularly money that is not of their own making"¹⁹⁰ weakens them. It exposes them to the fluctuations of the money market and undermines their security which is their main asset in the struggle for survival. That is the

reason for the peasants' innate distrust of all city-contacts and urban blue-prints for his "uplift".

Formerly, when wealth was stored in the form of commodities, it was not easy to steal, hide away, squander or misappropriate the fruits of honest toil. But now that wealth is stored in the form of money, this has become infinitely easy and there is no limit to it. Payment of dues in kind relates the nation's economy to things that are vitally necessary to the primary well-being of the common man. It brings the national finance "actually to earth" and gives to a nation's whole economy a different turn. "The ship of State and State-finance is seen to have a different rudder, which, though its small-scale movement is separate from the bulky movement of the great vessel, nevertheless determines the direction of that movement."¹⁹¹

To give to national economy that "primary initiation" in the well-being of the common man which would enable him to have real control over it, Gandhiji suggested that the bulk of the nation's wealth should be stored in a form that does not lend itself so readily to chicanery and abuse. As a step towards it, he began advocating payment of land dues in kind. Further, to rescue in as large a measure as possible village economy from the ambit of the modern monetary system, he began experimenting with such institutions as "grain banks", "hand-spun yarn currency" and a system of rural credit backed by labour instead of gold,¹⁹² holding with Sir Daniel Hamilton that "where men are plentiful, money need not be scarce. For the labour is their capital." Payment of Government dues in labour, he held, benefited the community no less than the State. "Often it will be found that payment in labour is of greater value to the State than payment in coin. Payment in labour invigorates the nation. Where people perform labour voluntarily for the service of society, exchange of money becomes unnecessary. The labour of collecting the taxes and keeping accounts is saved and the results are equally good."¹⁹³ It could further be shown, he claimed, "that by putting into practice the ideal of self-help and self-sufficiency they will have to pay the lowest taxes and realise a greater degree of happiness in the sum than is possible under any other system."¹⁹⁴ Payment in kind would also insure that the taxes realised from the toilers on the land would not be spirited away but would largely be used for the benefit of those from whom they were collected.

The bulk of the produce of the village, under this arrangement, would remain in the village itself and enable the villagers to convert their full potential of labour into capital. This would make it possible for them to carry out works and projects for their uplift without depending on financial aid from outside. Further, since the land dues would be in the form of a fixed share of the gross produce, the producer would not be cheated out of the fruits of his toil as he often is

at present. Urban prosperity would not be achieved at the expense of rural distress, nor would the grower's gain represent the consumer's loss. For such goods and services as the villagers might need from the cities—and these would be reduced to the absolute minimum—the villagers would collectively exchange their surplus produce on a fair and equitable basis.¹⁹⁵ Since the townsfolk would need what the villager produces as vitally as if not more than the villager needs their goods and services, they would not be able to charge the latter an outrageous price for the goods and services they provide to him. The glaring contrast between the level of rural and urban incomes would tend to disappear. All goods and services that are vital to society would command equal remuneration and an integrated, equalitarian social system emerge in the place of the present competitive one with vertical divisions. There was no other way, Gandhiji maintained, of insuring to the common man in the village the even tenor of a secure, comfortable existence, unaffected by unstable currency conditions and manipulations of the stock exchange by unscrupulous and greedy speculators, and free from urban domination, and exploitation of man and nature by subservience to money values, except to organise life on the basis of self-contained farming communities, independent of money economy at least so far as their internal needs were concerned.

A community organised on this basis would, averred Gandhiji, develop a strong sense of autonomy, security and inner strength, and possess a greater measure of real democracy and control over the things that are vital to their existence than citizens of any modern State do.

15

There are two well-known approaches to life. One is embodied in the well-known dictum of the famous German Professor, William Roscher: "Every advance in culture made by man finds expression in an increase in the number and in the keenness of his rational wants." The other is summed up in the Indian spiritual ideal of a wise and watchful self-restraint.

The soil sets limits. It requires the villager to contain himself within its capacity. The doctrine of the soil is, therefore, one of self-control and limitation of desires. Mechanised industry knows no such limitation. Its law is one of progressive increase. Those who laid down the pattern of India's ancient culture could not accept the notion that culture increases with the increase in the number of man's wants and their satisfaction. Man's wants are numberless, they argued. Therefore, if given free rein, they would lead to "ceaseless struggle and endless competition" in which "many would still have desires, which, being suppressed by circumstances but not by self-control",

would pervert the mind and spell misery. The only release from the earthly to the divine, they declared, was the path of voluntary self-control and eventual abolition of desire. Life's goal was not the satisfaction of man's "numberless wants" but attainment of perfection in the performance of one's essential duties, and realisation of oneness with the entire creation and through it with the supernal reality, by dint of selfless service of all that lives.

This concept found expression in India's indigenous village system based on functional division of society (see Vol. I, page 548). The other effloresced in the doctrine of progress and the economy of abundance on which the present-day industrial system is based.

"The mind is a restless bird," observed Gandhiji, "the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. . . . Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgence. . . . Our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre. They, therefore, after due deliberation, decided that we should only do what we could with our hands and feet. They saw that our real happiness and health consisted in a proper use of our hands and feet. They further reasoned that large cities were a snare and a useless encumbrance and that . . . in them . . . poor men would be robbed by rich men. They were, therefore, satisfied with small villages."¹⁹⁶

Gandhiji's system does not aim at what he dubbed as "the civilisation of the rose without the thorn". He did not believe in a "Brave New World"—from which all pain and toil have been abolished. "Life, demands for its consummation and fulfilment," Jung points out, "a balance between joy and suffering." But suffering is in itself unpleasant. People, therefore, "prefer not to think about how much care and sorrow belong to the natural lot of man. So they use comforting words such as progress and the greatest possible happiness, forgetting that happiness itself is poisoned when the measure of suffering has not been fulfilled."¹⁹⁷ The law of compensation is unrelenting. Behind a neurosis, psychiatrists tell us, "there is often concealed all the natural and necessary suffering which the patient has been unwilling to bear."¹⁹⁸ A patient suffering from hysterical pains, it is found, is cured when he accepts, and learns to live with, the corresponding psychic pain from which he sought to run away.

It was not for man, therefore, said Gandhiji, to hanker after an "impossible state of happiness" but to cultivate the right outlook and spiritual discipline which would enable him to face the problems of life with balance, fortitude and emotional maturity. Happiness contradicts itself when we make its pursuit our sole aim. In the words of Gerald Heard, happiness can be attained only as a "by-product of some farther-ranged activity". The same applies to economics. Only when we aim at "an order which transcends the economic and the

material’’¹⁹⁹ that we get even the right material conditions under which the ends of economics, viz. health, happiness and peace of the individual and society can be realised. It is not the economic progress that we achieve but what happens to us in its pursuit, that really matters. “With the best will in the world,” Jung warns us, “we cannot bring about paradise on earth, and even if we could, in a very short time we should have degenerated in every way.”²⁰⁰ The highest suicide and insanity rates in the world today in some of the most highly industrialised countries, where in terms of material happiness, the people have practically nothing left to desire, bears this out.

To the modern “intellectual” manual toil is a sign of barbarism, at best a necessary evil, which science will enable us one day to outgrow. Yet work, physical work, as Freud has reminded us, is “the chief means of binding an individual to reality.” “Reality,” observes H. J. Massingham, “is apprehended through the medium of religion, agriculture and the ‘manual trades’. . . . These are the basic activities by which the universal communicates itself to the particular, the eternal to the temporal and the absolute to the relative.”²⁰¹

Gandhiji did not regard all body labour as the “curse of Adam”. On the contrary, he firmly believed that body labour, or “bread labour” as he called it after the expression coined by the Russian peasant-writer Bondaref, was the law of life and eating one’s bread in the sweat of one’s brow a necessary condition for the health, happiness and inner peace of the individual and society. Many of our present-day social ills, he held, were traceable to the infringement of this law: “Obedience to the law of bread labour will bring about a silent revolution in the structure of society. Man’s triumph will consist in substituting the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service. The law of the brute will be replaced by the law of man.”²⁰²

“We contemplate a time,” observed Thoreau, “when man’s will shall be law to the physical world, and he shall . . . indeed be the lord of creation. . . . Thus is Paradise to be Regained and that old and stern decree at length reversed. Man shall no more earn his living by the sweat of his brow. All labour shall be reduced to ‘a short turn of some crank’ and ‘taking the finished articles away.’” This, however, he pointed out, leaves out—and there’s the rub—one consideration. There is “a certain divine energy in every man, but sparingly employed as yet” which is “quite indispensable to all work. No work can be shirked. It may be postponed indefinitely, but not infinitely. Nor can any really important work be made easier by . . . machinery. Not one particle of labour now threatening any man can be routed without being performed. It cannot be hunted out of the vicinity like jackals and hyenas. It will not run.” Nor is this something to be deplored. For there is a “small, private, but both constant and accumulated, force which stands behind every spade

in the field. This it is that makes the valleys shine, and the deserts really bloom.”²⁰³

It was the proper and full utilisation for the regeneration of man and nature of this reserve of divine energy, which the masses represent, that was the aim of Gandhiji's system of economy. Return to the village, according to him, meant “a definite voluntary recognition of the duty of bread labour and all that it connotes.”²⁰⁴

Gandhiji found sanction for his philosophy of “body labour” in a verse in the Gita which says that he who eats without offering “sacrifice” eats sin. The word “sacrifice” in this context, he affirmed, could only mean “bread labour”. “Reason too leads us to an identical conclusion. . . . A millionaire cannot carry on for long, and will soon get tired of his life, if he rolls in his bed all day long, and is even helped to his food. He therefore induces hunger by exercise, and helps himself to the food he eats. If every one, whether rich or poor, has thus to take exercise in some shape or form, why should it not assume the form of productive, i.e. bread labour? No-one asks the cultivator to take breathing exercise or to work his muscles. And more than nine-tenths of humanity lives by tilling the soil. How much happier, healthier and more peaceful would the world become, if the remaining tenth followed the example of the overwhelming majority, at least to the extent of (performing) labour enough for their food!”²⁰⁵

It may, however, be objected that the potential benefits of life on the land are largely hypothetical. To millions of people living in India's villages at any rate, life today means only destitution, toil and semi-starvation. This, Gandhiji admitted, was unfortunately but too true. The real cause for this, however, was that theirs was not voluntary obedience to the law of bread labour. “Compulsory obedience to the law of bread labour breeds poverty, disease and discontent. It is a state of slavery. Willing obedience to it, must bring contentment and health. And it is health which is real wealth.”²⁰⁶ Under proper economic conditions life of active physical work on the land need not be dull or exhausting. In fact, there is no end to the interest and even excitement to be derived from it. If it is otherwise today the reason for it is not physical labour but because many, who ought to, do not perform it. Many hardships connected with agriculture would easily be redressed, said Gandhiji, if everybody took a hand in it. What is more, “invidious distinctions of rank would be abolished, when every one without exception acknowledged the obligation of bread labour. . . . There is a world-wide conflict between capital and labour, and the poor envy the rich. If all worked for their bread, distinctions of rank would be obliterated; the rich would still be there, but they would deem themselves only trustees of their property, and would use it mainly in the public interest.”²⁰⁷

In a moving passage in his book *The Conquest of Bread* Prince Kropotkin has described how of all the great days of the French Revolution "the greatest was the one on which the delegates who had come from all parts of France to Paris, worked all with the spade to plane the ground of the Champ de Mars, preparing it for the fete of the Federation."

That day France was united: animated by the new spirit, she had a vision of the future in the working in common of the soil.

And it will again be by the working in common of the soil that the enfranchised societies will find their unity and will obliterate the hatred and oppression which has hitherto divided them.

Henceforth, able to conceive solidarity—that immense power which increases man's energy and creative forces a hundred-fold—the new society will march to the conquest of the future with all the vigour of youth.

Ceasing to produce for unknown buyers and looking in its midst for needs and tastes to be satisfied, society will liberally assure the life and ease of each of its members, as well as that moral satisfaction which work gives when freely chosen and freely accomplished, and the joy of living without encroaching on the life of others.

Inspired by a new daring—born of the feeling of solidarity—all will march together to the conquest of the high joys of knowledge and artistic creation.²⁰⁸

Behind Gandhiji's passion for the resuscitation of the spinning-wheel, and a social order in which the values symbolised by it would find full expression, was his deep yearning to realise his identity with the Ultimate by identifying himself with the millions who toil.

16

One thing, however, must be conceded. Gandhiji's system of economy will not enable us to build a mighty war potential. The nature of modern war is such that it cannot be successfully waged by any nation which does not possess a highly developed system of capital goods industry supplemented by mass-producing consumer goods industry, which can be quickly converted for war-time needs in armaments and other war material. Again, modern war cannot be waged successfully except by nations that can mobilise their entire manpower in military or industrial conscription. And the universal conscription of population as well as conscription of wealth in the form of heavy war-time taxation can be best enforced when large numbers of people are dependent for their livelihood upon large-scale, private

employers and corporations, or that biggest of corporations—the State. Cottage industries cannot finance a growing war machine.

The people have, therefore, to make their choice. If they want armaments—a mighty war machine—centralised, mechanised system of mass production is the way. They, too, will then have their armament kings and “merchants of death”, their Schneiders and Skodas, who will not scruple to amass profits by selling in between wars their surplus of armaments to their potential enemies. Governments have been known to connive at and even to encourage such practices to keep running in peace time their ordnance factories at full throttle. And in the event of a war, these armaments may be used by the enemy against the very country that produced them, as happened during the two world wars. On the other hand, if peace, freedom, health and plenty for the millions, and culture in the real sense of the term is what we desire, then all this can be had most easily by following Gandhiji’s method.

“But then our neighbours will swallow us,” we shall be told. This fear, said Gandhiji, was unbecoming a people that could bring to its knees the mighty British Power in the short span of one generation. A people that had learnt the art of non-violent non-cooperation and non-violent resistance unto death could not be easily swallowed or digested by any power. Under right conditions non-violent defence against aggression could yield even more spectacular results than what could be obtained by the use of arms. The condition was that the people should be determined to be wiped out rather than submit or cooperate with the invader in any shape or form. This applies equally to armed defence. Now, a country with a decentralised system of economy based on cottage crafts and self-contained villages, can offer obstinate, prolonged, non-violent resistance to the invader much better than a country where life is organised on a highly complex, mechanised basis. Such resistance is bound in the end to wear down the invader and force him to come to terms, especially if the numbers are on the side of the defenders. A centralised, factory-based system of economy presents a tempting target to the enemy. By seizing it or disrupting it, he can bring all life to a stand-still and reduce the people to submission. That was what happened in Amritsar when General Dyer cut off the water and electric supply of the city during the Martial Law regime in 1919. A rural economy based on self-contained villages or groups of villages is not so easily disrupted, and recovery after devastation is much quicker. As Gandhiji put it, it would take quite a long time to blast out a whole sub-continent village by village and hamlet by hamlet. “Even if Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate seven hundred thousand non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process.”²⁰⁹

Besides, is there any guarantee that armaments would always prove effective against aggression? And if armaments fail, as they inevitably do before superior armaments and sometimes even before inferior ones, what then? It is a common experience that when people put their trust in armaments, there is nothing left but abject surrender if their armaments are overpowered, or if they are disarmed. The philosophy of the Maginot Line, Gandhiji warned us, would prove a dangerous trap if we put our faith in it. It failed France in her hour of trial, just as its counterpart failed Hitler's Germany later and ended in its utter ruin. But there is a potent and unfailing means of vindicating their honour and self-respect always available to a people trained to wield the weapon of Satyagraha. Gandhiji revealed to us its secret at the time of the threatened Japanese invasion during the darkest period of the Second World War (see Vol. II, Appendix A). It enabled us to keep our heads erect and our spirits braced. Finally, extermination under Satyagraha is not extinction. And if war unto death can be an admissible solution of the problem posed by possible aggression by a powerful neighbour, why not non-violent non-cooperation unto death without surrender?

The question of national defence in the present-day shrinking world is in a sense a part of the wider issue of world peace. We look forward to the day when war will be outlawed by civilised nations as the quintessence of barbarism and bestiality, and universal peace will reign upon earth. Peace through a world organisation is the dream of the present era. The difficulty arises in finding an apt sanction. If there is one thing that the two world wars within our memory have conclusively shown, it is the hollowness of the myth of "war to end war". Realisation of peace through a world organisation must remain an empty dream so long as the only sanction available to us is that of military force like what the aggressor commands. To put down aggression by military force, the world organisation would have to outdo the aggressor in ruthlessness; indifferent adoption of his method won't do. But if that is done, the particular aggressor may be destroyed but his method will remain. It will not be truth or justice necessarily that will have triumphed but the logic of superior brute force. And if the world organisation itself became corrupt, or were dominated by power politics, and delivered a wrong judgment, *Quis custodiet custodes?*—who would then guard the guardians of peace? Must justice in that case go under without any prospect or means of redress or appeal? No human institution is infallible. In the words of Aldous Huxley, so long as the lust of power persists, no political arrangement, however well contrived, can guarantee peace. An all-powerful world organisation armed with the power of atomic destruction, and grown intolerant, arrogant or corrupt, would spell a worse tyranny than mankind has ever known.

Only a world organisation backed by a moral or non-violent sanction can, therefore, guarantee world peace. Speaking about the League of Nations at Geneva in 1931, Gandhiji remarked: "It has always seemed to me that the League lacks the necessary sanctions. . . . I venture to suggest to you that the means we have adopted in India supply the necessary sanction . . . to a body like the League of Nations."²¹⁰ His conception of a world Government was that in it all the States of the world are free and equal, no State has its military. "All will be disarmed."²¹¹ There might be a world police to keep order in the absence of universal belief in non-violence. But this would be "a concession to human weakness, not . . . an emblem of peace."²¹² Even this international force would be more of the nature of a *shanti sena* or a peace brigade than a modern fighting force commanding unlimited power of destruction. Armaments were unnecessary for the vindication of proved rights, held Gandhiji. "Proved right should be capable of being vindicated by right means as against the rude, i.e. sanguinary means."²¹³

The essential condition of the success of a world federation in this context would thus be equality and independence of all nations, big and small. "And the nature of that independence," said Gandhiji, "will correspond to the extent of non-violence assimilated by the nations concerned."²¹⁴ To have a warless world, therefore, the economy of the participating units must be free from exploitation in every shape or form—exploitation of the poor by the rich, of the masses by the classes, of the villages by the towns, and of the weaker or so-called undeveloped races by the stronger and more advanced ones.

The reason why the world had become such an insecure place to live in, Gandhiji reasoned, was that while everybody, including the great powers, talked about peace and the abolition of war, they were not prepared to renounce the things for which wars are fought. Imperialist powers clearly could not renounce armaments without "renouncing their imperialist designs." And this was not possible "without these great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and therefore increase their material possessions."²¹⁵ During the last world war Gandhiji therefore warned his English pacifist friends that they had to become "little Englanders" and be prepared to sacrifice the bloated standard of living to which they had got accustomed before they could effectively work for world peace.

Wars do not originate at the battle fronts. Nor does peace return automatically when actual fighting ceases. The roots of war lie in conditions that are endemic in our present-day society. That is the reason why, as Norman Thomas pointed out in his book *The Conscientious Objector in America*, the conscientious objector's negative attitude in regard to participation in war proves inadequate. International

tensions these days are very often a reflex of the internal socio-economic tensions within nations. To abolish war we have to eradicate these tensions. Adoption of a non-violent, non-exploiting system of economy, which would ensure to everybody equality and social justice would, therefore, said Gandhiji, prove the surest guarantee for world peace and a country's best defence in the event of aggression.

Exploiting none nor fearing exploitation by any, such a country would discard all armaments and endeavour "to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours."²¹⁶ It would "covet no foreign territory",²¹⁷ nor use its material and moral resources for its own selfish advancement only but for the service of the people even across its borders who might be backward or otherwise in need. For its defence it would "rely on the goodwill of the whole world."²¹⁸ Even the weakest State could in this way "render itself immune from attack" by learning the art of non-violence, whereas "a small State, no matter how powerfully armed it is, cannot exist in the midst of a powerful combination of well-armed States. It has to be absorbed by or be under the protection of one of the members of such a combination."²¹⁹

Gandhiji's plan of action for meeting the hypothetical case of armed aggression by non-violence can be divided into three parts: before the invasion, during the invasion, and after the invasion. Before the invasion the technique would consist in not waiting to be attacked by the aggressor but forestalling him by a "counter invasion" of goodwill, neighbourliness and unselfish acts of service and of love. How he planned to apply this method to check the trans-border raids in the North-West Frontier Province—that land of fierce Pathan warriors renowned in history—will be found described in my book *A Pilgrimage for Peace*. On a small scale this method was tried with complete success when Gandhiji's Ashram at Sabarmati began to be harassed by members of a criminal tribe that had settled in the vicinity of the Ashram.

During the invasion, the technique would consist in offering non-violent resistance unto death to the last man, and in total non-cooperation with the invader, while not missing any opportunity of rendering humanitarian service to the individual members of the invading hosts whenever an opportunity presented itself. A detailed plan of action in this regard was developed by Gandhiji when India was menaced by the Japanese invasion and the British Government had decided to withdraw their forces to a remote line of defence, which would have left large parts of the country open to the invader.²²⁰

Should action outlined in the first two stages prove unsuccessful and the aggressor come to occupy the country, resistance would take the form of non-violent non-cooperation and all other forms of Satyagraha.

What would a country pledged to non-violence do if an aggressor

threatened to violate her neutrality and overrun a small neighbouring State? Gandhiji was once asked. Rather than be a passive witness to the destruction of her neighbour's independence, he replied, such a country would refuse passage to the invader, withhold all supplies and dare him "to walk over your (the defenders') corpses." "The army would be brutal enough to walk over them, you might say. I would then say, you will still have done your duty by allowing yourself to be annihilated. An army that dares to pass over the corpses of innocent men and women would not be able to repeat the experiment."²²¹

Suppose, the worst came to the worst and the friendly neutral power or powers were unable to prevent aggression, there would still be two ways open to non-violence. One would be to yield possession but non-cooperate with the aggressor. The second way would be non-violent resistance unto death to the last man. "They would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannon. . . . The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery."²²²

The sceptic might here retort that the aggressor would probably "wisely refrain" from using force but simply take possession of what he wants. Supposing he came and occupied mines, factories and all sources of natural wealth belonging to a people, what could non-violent resistance do in the circumstances? The only difference that the adoption of non-violence would make would be that the aggressor would get without fighting what he would otherwise have gained after a bloody fight. Gandhiji's answer to this is that in that case either of the following can take place: (1) The victims of aggression may non-violently resist the occupation of their country and may be annihilated. That would be a "glorious victory" for them and the "beginning of the fall" of the aggressor. (2) They might become demoralised in the presence of the overwhelming force. "This is a result common in all struggles, but if demoralisation does take place, it would not be on account of non-violence." (3) The aggressor might use her new possessions for occupation by her surplus population. "This, again, could not be avoided by offering violent resistance, for we have assumed that violent resistance is out of the question. Thus non-violent resistance is the best method in all conceivable circumstances."²²³ Moreover, under non-violence only those would be killed "who had trained themselves to be killed if need be but without killing anyone and without malice towards anybody."²²⁴ Such a feat of non-violent heroism would raise the moral stature of the defenders to an undreamt of height and rouse the slumbering conscience of humanity. A bloody fight, on the other hand, never settles anything and brings only demoralisation in its train to the victor and the vanquished alike.

In 1938, when Japan was overrunning China, in the course of a talk with a group of foreign visitors, Gandhiji said : "If the Chinese had non-violence of my conception, there would be no use left for the latest machinery for destruction which Japan possesses. The Chinese would say to Japan, 'Bring all your machinery, we present half of our population to you. But the remaining two hundred millions won't bend their knee to you.' If the Chinese did that, Japan would become China's slave."²²⁵ He, however, made it clear that for their non-violence to be successful, the Chinese would have to love the Japanese not by remembering their virtues ; they "must be able to love them in spite of all their misdeeds."²²⁶

What use will be freedom if there is no-one left to enjoy it? it may be asked. To this Gandhiji's reply is a counter question : "Who enjoys the freedom when whole divisions of armed soldiers rush into a hailstorm of bullets to be mown down?" Is it not rather strange, he asks, that the soldier fights though he never expects to enjoy the fruits of victory? "But in the case of non-violence, everybody seems to start with the assumption that the non-violent method must be set down as a failure unless he himself at least lives to enjoy the success thereof. This is both illogical and invidious. In Satyagraha more than in armed warfare, it may be said that we find life by losing it."²²⁷

Again it has been objected that wars are fought in order to protect life and property when these are endangered. But Gandhiji said that "so long as the desire to protect life and property remains within us, our Ahimsa cannot be said to be pure."²²⁸ Does this not make nonsense of the whole idea of protection of life and property by non-violence? Gandhiji has an answer to this also. As in armed warfare, so in a non-violent fight, the "entire population will not enlist in the army. But those who are willing to protect the millions by means of non-violence will have to renounce all worldly attachment."²²⁹ Nor is it necessary for the entire population to have faith in Ahimsa before non-violent resistance can be offered successfully on a national scale. In armed warfare every soldier is not and need not be an expert in the military science. Even so, in a non-violent struggle it would be enough, said Gandhiji, if the General had a living faith in non-violence and the people had faith in their General, and the discipline of non-violence to carry out in a soldierly manner faithfully and implicitly the General's orders. For his movement, therefore, he did not need "believers in the theory of non-violence full or imperfect. It is enough if the people carry out the rules of non-violent action."²³⁰

At any rate, there is no sense in adopting a remedy which ruins a people's economy utterly even before the war begins, irrespective of who wins, and jeopardises democratic freedoms even in peace time for the fear that they might be lost in war. "A society which anticipates and provides for meeting violence with violence," wrote Gandhiji in

1940, "will either lead a precarious life or create big cities and magazines for defence purposes. It is not unreasonable to presume from the state of Europe that its cities, its monster factories and huge armaments are so intimately interrelated that the one cannot exist without the other."²³¹ Civil liberties are always among the first casualties in war. Nothing comes handier to the military dictators than the plea of preparedness for war as a justification for demanding unquestioning obedience in the name of "national unity" and imposing upon the people a totalitarian regimentation in the name of war-time efficiency. "The science of war," Gandhiji warned, "leads one to dictatorship pure and simple. The science of non-violence can alone lead on to pure democracy."²³² The democracies, therefore, said Gandhiji, had either to become truly non-violent or go totalitarian.²³³ Unless they courageously became non-violent, they would be forced to adopt "all the tactics of the Fascists and the Nazis including conscription and all other forcible methods to compel and exact obedience."²³⁴

Even though he were alone, therefore, said Gandhiji, he would proclaim from the housetop his faith that it was better for India "to discard violence altogether even for defending her borders. For India to enter into the race for armaments is to commit suicide."²³⁵ A free India need not keep a huge standing army, he observed in his prayer speech on the 29th November, 1947. "Voluntary Home Guards would protect their homes and contribute to the defence of the country." India unarmed would not require to be destroyed through poison gas or bombardment. "It is the Maginot Line that has made the Seigfried Line necessary, and *vice versa*. . . . If her people have learnt the art of saying resolutely 'no' and acting up to it, I dare say, no-one would want to invade her."²³⁶

This, Gandhiji explained in the course of a talk with Louis Fischer at Sevagram in 1942, would mean a thorough decentralisation of power. "You see, the centre of power now is in New Delhi, or in Calcutta and Bombay, in the big cities. I would have it distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India." Using the analogy of the Government of India's reserves that were kept in the Imperial Bank of India, he proceeded: "I want the seven hundred thousand dollars . . . withdrawn and distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages. Then each village will have its one dollar which cannot be lost. The seven hundred thousand dollars invested in the Imperial Bank of India could be swept away by a bomb from a Japanese plane, whereas if they were distributed among the seven hundred thousand shareholders, nobody could deprive them of their assets."²³⁷

A centralised economy cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force, argued Gandhiji. But "simple homes from which there is nothing to take away require no policing; the palaces of the rich must

have strong guards to protect them against dacoity. So must huge factories. Rurally organised India will run less risk of foreign invasion than urbanised India, well equipped with military, naval and air forces.”²³⁸

Her internal economy would thus, said Gandhiji, prove “India’s strongest bulwark against aggression.”²³⁹ She would cease to be the object of “greedy attraction” for any power and feel secure “without having to carry the burden of expensive armaments.”²⁴⁰ What was more, India could in this way point the way to other struggling people of the world. The world looked for something “new and unique” from India. She would be “lost in the crowd” if she wore “the same old outworn armour that the world is wearing today.”²⁴¹

17

India had been forcibly disarmed under the British. This had emasculated India. Must not India, therefore, rearm and train herself in the use of arms before she could become truly non-violent? some asked. “No”, said Gandhiji. He had described war as “a respectable term for goondaism.”²⁴² “The hypnotism of the Indian National Army (of Netaji Bose) has cast its spell upon us,” he had warned when many had succumbed to it.²⁴³ That India was disarmed, he said, was no obstacle in the path of Ahimsa. “The forcible disarmament of India by the British Government was indeed a grave wrong and a cruel injustice. But we can turn even injustice to our advantage.”²⁴⁴ Training in arms, he held, was altogether unnecessary for developing non-violent courage. In fact “the arms if any have to be thrown away.”²⁴⁵ The Pathans in the North-West Frontier Province under the inspiration and leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had done this. It had forced from the British the admission that a non-violent Pathan was more dangerous than a Pathan with arms.²⁴⁶ To hold that it was essential to learn violence before one could attain non-violence, would be, said Gandhiji, tantamount to holding that only sinners could be saints. Far more terrible weapons than mankind had ever seen before had come into existence and newer ones were being invented every day. Of what fear would a “sword rid him who has to cultivate the capacity to overcome all fear—real or imaginary?” he asked. “I have not yet heard of a man having shed all fear by learning sword-play. Mahavir and others who imbibed Ahimsa did not do so because they knew the use of weapons, but because in spite of the knowledge of their use they shed all fear.”²⁴⁷

Besides, he argued, “he who has always depended upon the sword will always find it difficult to throw it away.”²⁴⁸ It is true

that by deliberately discarding arms "he is likely to find his Ahimsa more lasting than that of him who, not knowing its (the sword's) use, fancies he will not fear it."²⁴⁹ But that does not mean that in order to be truly non-violent, one must beforehand possess and know the use of arms. "By parity of reasoning, one might say that only a thief can be honest, only a diseased person can be healthy, and only a dissolute person can be Brahmachari."²⁵⁰

Gandhiji did not have the time in the midst of his other pre-occupations to tackle the question of the training and organisation of a non-violent force of his conception except in a desultory way. But after the resignation of the Congress Ministries in the Provinces at the outbreak of the Second World War, when communal rioting broke out in several parts of India, he began to outline his ideas on the training and organisation of *shanti senas* or a non-violent force in concrete detail. The picture is necessarily incomplete for the simple reason that Gandhiji had no past experience to fall back upon. But some of the underlying principles of non-violent training and equipment necessary for a soldier of Satyagraha enunciated by him from time to time can usefully be summarised.

The first requisite for the successful organisation of non-violent defence is faith in its feasibility and in human nature. "Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I *cannot* do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I *can* do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning."²⁵¹

The difficulty is that the non-violent process is wholly different from the one commonly known. A study of the "critical limit" phenomena in the physical world shows that the normal laws governing the behaviour of matter are altered, sometimes reversed, once the critical limit is passed. An analogous thing happens when we pass from a violent army to a non-violent force. Very few of the rules applying to the organisation and training of a violent army apply to the training of a non-violent force. In fact very often the opposite holds good. For instance, a violent army will have arms not merely for show but for effective killing. A non-violent army will not only have no use for such weapons but it will "beat its swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks."²⁵² In the case of candidates recruited for a violent army physical fitness is the only thing examined. The chief thing in selecting recruits for a non-violent body would be mental or spiritual fitness. Since even old men, women and children, or those suffering from a physical ailment may have this fitness as well as any able-bodied man, a non-violent army may have in its ranks "old men, women, raw youths, the blind and the lame, and even lepers" and yet "bid fair to win."²⁵³ Again, "the ability to kill requires training.

The ability to die is there in him who has the will for it. One can conceive of a child of ten or twelve being a perfect Satyagrahi."²⁵⁴ Or to put it differently, "The art of dying follows as a corollary from the art of living."²⁵⁵

This does not mean that members of a Satyagrahi army have no need for physical fitness. If the Satyagrahi is not healthy in mind and body, warned Gandhiji, "he may . . . fail in mustering complete fearlessness."²⁵⁶ The practice of Ahimsa includes certain duties which can only be performed by those with a trained physique. For instance, "he should have the capacity to stand guard at a single spot day and night ; he must not fall ill even if he has to bear cold and heat and rain; he must have the strength to go to places of peril, to rush to scenes of fire and the courage to wander about alone in desolate jungles and haunts of death; he will bear without a grumble, severe beatings, starvation and worse, and will keep to his post of duty without flinching; he will have the resourcefulness and capacity to plunge into a seemingly impenetrable scene of rioting; he will have the longing and capacity to run with the name of God on his lips to the rescue of men living on the top-storeys of buildings enveloped in flames ; he will have the fearlessness to plunge into a flood in order to rescue people being carried off by it or to jump down a well to save a drowning person."²⁵⁷ The list can be extended *ad libitum*. "The substance of it all is that we should cultivate the capacity to run to the rescue of people in danger and distress and to suffer cheerfully any amount of hardship that may be inflicted upon us."²⁵⁸ From this it should easily be possible to frame rules of physical training for Satyagrahis.

The best training for the purpose in Gandhiji's opinion is provided by some of the exercises in *Hatha Yoga*. "The physical training given by means of these imparts among other things physical health, strength, agility, and the capacity to bear heat and cold."²⁵⁹ He did not know, he said, whether the author of this science had any idea of mass non-violence. These exercises "had at their back the desire for individual salvation." Their object was "to strengthen and purify the body in order to secure control of the mind."²⁶⁰ This system might have to be suitably adapted to meet the requirements of giving training in mass non-violence to people of all religions, and rules would have to be framed which could be accepted by all believers in Ahimsa.

Cultivation of bravery is common to both violence and non-violence. There is, however, one difference. The courage of violence "does not mean emancipation from fear, but discovering the means of combating the cause of fear."²⁶¹ The votary of non-violence has to cultivate "the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear."²⁶² He has to shed the triple fear of jail going,

loss of possessions and of death. "He recks not if he should lose his land, his wealth, his life. He who has not overcome all fear cannot practise Ahimsa to perfection. The votary of Ahimsa has only one fear, that is, of God."²⁶³ He has therefore to develop a steady awareness of the separateness of the perishable body and the immortal spirit within, which survives and can exist independently of the body, by cultivating indifference to the latter and bringing it more and more under the control of the spirit.

Training in non-violence is thus diametrically opposed to training in violence. "Violence is needed for the protection of things external, non-violence is needed for the protection of the *Atman* (spirit), for the protection of one's honour. . . . The badge of the violent is his weapons—spear, or sword, or rifle. God is the shield of the non-violent."²⁶⁴ The training of a soldier of non-violence will consist not in learning to shoot. He will "get all his training through nursing the sick, saving those in danger at the risk of his own life, patrolling places which may be in fear of thieves and dacoits, and in laying down his life, if necessary, in dissuading them from their purpose."²⁶⁵

Even the uniforms of the two will be different. The uniform of a soldier of violence would be meant to "dazzle" the beholder. "The uniform of the non-violent man will be simple, in conformity with the dress of the poor, and betokening humility."²⁶⁶

In a violent army, the greater the competence and the higher the rank, the greater will be the remuneration that he will receive. In the case of a non-violent force merit will not be measured or rewarded in terms of material remuneration. On the contrary, the General will be a person known for his penance, self-restraint and renunciation.

The violent man, again, will be casting about to compass the destruction of the opponent and his power. He will pray to God "to save the king, scatter his enemies, frustrate his knavish tricks" as millions of Englishmen do when they sing aloud the British National anthem. "If God is the Incarnation of Mercy, He is not likely to listen to such prayer but it cannot but affect the minds of those who sing it, and in times of war it simply kindles their hatred and anger to white heat."²⁶⁷ The prayer of a soldier of non-violence to God, on the other hand, will always be that "He may give the supposed enemy a sense of right and bless him. His prayer for himself will always be that the spring of compassion in him may ever be flowing, and that he may ever grow in moral strength so that he may face death fearlessly."²⁶⁸ Total defeat of the opponent can have no place in the strategy of non-violence. In fact it is the acid test of true non-violence that at the end of the struggle there is no "victor and vanquished" feeling left. Both the parties share the joy of reconciliation

and of the vindication of truth and justice as a result of their joint endeavour. In a non-violent struggle, therefore, one will seek not to destroy the power of the opponent but to annex his power by effecting a change of heart in him. A soldier of Satyagraha will, therefore, regard the opponent he is fighting as a potential friend and ally and do nothing that is calculated to provoke him into a wrong action, or that is likely to wound him or deepen the antagonism. He will always try to find meeting ground with him and even go out of his way to do him a good turn.

The one condition of winning a violent war is "to keep the indignation against the enemy burning fiercely and subject him to the maximum of provocation."²⁶⁹ "The secret of Satyagraha lies in not tempting the wrong-doer to do wrong."²⁷⁰ This alters the whole technique of conducting negotiations, publicity and propaganda in a non-violent fight. The soldier of non-violence will always try to see the best side of his opponent instead of seeing the worst and present to him also the same—"work on, round, upon that side . . . not dangle his faults before him."²⁷¹

Discipline has, indeed, a place in non-violent strategy, as in armed warfare. But there is an important difference. Discipline is of two kinds—external and internal. The discipline inculcated by military training belongs to the first variety. It holds only in the context in which it is imparted. The looseness and indiscipline of the soldier outside the parade ground is not an uncommon experience. Internal discipline is the result of disciplined living. It becomes our second nature and it endures.

Military discipline presupposes an outside authority with an effective sanction to enforce it. It crumbles when the enforcing machinery breaks down. In a non-violent fight everybody is a soldier and a servant. But at a pinch every Satyagrahi soldier has also to be his own General and leader. Mere mechanical discipline cannot make for leadership in a non-violent struggle. For that faith and vision are needed. The discipline rooted in the adherence to the spirit of truth and non-violence brings about an automatic coordination of action which defies all the power of the tyrant to disrupt it. Such is the testimony of the early history of Christianity under persecution. The same was borne out by the various non-violent struggles launched by Gandhiji. They all became at one stage or another, in a large measure, self-acting, self-guided, self-inspired, and self-controlled. In every obstinate non-violent struggle, a stage can and usually does eventually arrive when external organisation is wiped out. The co-ordination and organisation based on inner discipline is the only thing that survives all shocks. Tolstoy compared the world to a vast temple with light falling through the dome exactly in the middle. "To be united," he observed, "we must not go in search of one another,

we must all go towards the light. Then all of us, come together from all directions, will find ourselves in company of men we did not look for.”

Other parts of military training that can have a place in non-violent training are music, drill, organising camp life, signalling and scouting, first aid, control of epidemics and repairing of damage caused by natural calamities like floods, cyclones, earthquake and so on. To these must be added mass singing and mass prayer. A non-violent soldier must besides develop an aptitude for mastering the language of the people among whom he has to work.

The best training ground for a soldier of non-violence is the arena of civil commotion, or where hooligans run amok. “He who trembles or takes to his heels the moment he sees two people fighting is not non-violent, but a coward.”²⁷² Such a one will never become a soldier of non-violence. A non-violent soldier will not turn his face away from the scene of a quarrel or merely look on. He will plunge into the melee and “lay down his life in preventing such quarrels.”²⁷³ A member of *shanti sena* or a “peace brigade” must cultivate true Ahimsa in the heart “that takes even the erring hooligan in its warm embrace.”²⁷⁴ Such an attitude cannot be cultivated except by “a prolonged and patient effort which must be made during peaceful times. The would-be member of a peace brigade should come into close touch and cultivate acquaintance with the so-called goonda element in his vicinity. He should know all and be known to all and win the hearts of all by his living and selfless service. No section should be regarded as too contemptible or mean to mix with. Goondas . . . are the product of social disorganisation, and society is therefore responsible for their existence. In other words, they should be looked upon as a symptom of corruption in our body politic. To remove the disease we must first discover the underlying cause. To find the remedy will then be a comparatively easy task.”²⁷⁵

An essential part of the training of a non-violent soldier, according to Gandhiji, is Brahmacharya or chastity. In the context of non-violent physical training it has a special significance. “He who intends to live on spare diet and without any external remedies and still wants to have physical strength, has need to conserve his vital energy. . . . He who can preserve it ever gains renewed strength out of it.”²⁷⁶ Gandhiji, however, warned that this is not possible without strict observance of all the rules of Brahmacharya. “Those who hope to conserve this energy without strict observance of the rules will no more succeed than those who hope to swim against the current without being exhausted. He who restrains himself physically and sins with his thoughts will fare worse than he who, without professing to observe Brahmacharya, lives the life of a restrained householder.”²⁷⁷

The rock-bottom foundation of the training of a non-violent soldier is faith in God. If that is absent, said Gandhiji, all the training one may have received is likely to fail at the critical moment. "Let no-one pooh-pooh my statement. . . . I am simply trying to state the view in terms of the science of Satyagraha as I have known and developed it. The only weapon of the Satyagrahi is God by whatever name one knows Him. Without Him the Satyagrahi is devoid of strength before an opponent armed with monstrous weapons. Most people lie prostrate before physical might. But he who accepts God as his only Protector will remain unbent before the mightiest earthly power."²⁷⁸

In a non-violent fight one cannot always plan in detail ahead of a situation. Preparation in Satyagraha consists in planning one's own life so as to be able to react correctly in terms of truth and non-violence to any situation that might arise. The general of a non-violent army has therefore to have a greater presence of mind and resourcefulness than that of a violent army.

To sum up, the equipment of a Satyagrahi soldier will consist not of weapons of steel but those of the spirit. In Tulsi Ramayana, Vibhishan asks Rama as to what the real equipment of a Satyagrahi army is that leads to victory. Rama had "no chariot, no armour, nor any shoes to his feet." Then how did he expect to win against Ravana, who had all these? To him Rama replies:

The chariot, my dear Vibhishan, that wins the victory for Rama is of a different sort from the usual one. Manliness and courage are its wheels; unflinching truth and character its banners and standards; strength, discrimination, self-restraint and benevolence its horses, with forgiveness, mercy, equanimity as their reins; prayer to God is that conqueror's unerring chariot-*eer*, dispassion his shield, contentment his sword, charity his axe, intellect his spear, and perfect science his stout bow. His pure and unwavering mind stands for a quiver, his mental quietude and his practice of *yama* and *niyama* stand for the sheaf of arrows, and the homage he pays to Brahmans and his *guru* is his impenetrable armour. There is no other equipment for victory comparable to this; and my dear friend, there is no enemy who can conquer the man who takes his stand on the chariot of *dharma*. He who has a powerful chariot like this is a warrior who can conquer even that great and invincible enemy—the world. Harken unto me and fear not.

An army, however small, of truly non-violent soldiers thus equipped, said Gandhiji, was likely some day to multiply itself. God has a knack of making use of even frail instruments to accomplish

His purpose. But an army that lacked this equipment "was never likely to yield any use whether it increased or decreased."²⁷⁹

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Henry David Thoreau, who shared many things with Gandhiji, in a review of a scientific utopia by a contemporary writer, Etzler,²⁸⁰ observed that there was a speedier way than harnessing "the power of the wind, waves, tide and sunshine" to create a paradise on earth, and that was by "the power of rectitude and true behaviour". "He who is conversant with the supernal power will not worship these inferior deities of the wind, waves, tide, and sunshine. . . . Love is the wind, the tide, the waves, the sunshine. . . . It can warm without fire; it can feed without meat; it can clothe without garments; it can shelter without roof; it can make a paradise within which will dispense with a paradise without."²⁸¹

Gandhiji's distrust of utopias was not less than Thoreau's. He described as a "nightmare" the push-button era pictured in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* which would bring every conceivable physical comfort that a man could desire by just pressing a button. Like Thoreau he held that if we could set right our moral relationship with our fellow beings, it would solve all human problems much quicker than any "mechanical system", and create heaven upon earth which even the gods might envy. The instrument he conceived for achieving this transformation of human relationships is his doctrine of Trusteeship.

There is in the New Testament the story of the miracle of five loaves and two fishes which Tolstoy has interpreted for us in his own inimitable way. Shortly after Jesus had commenced his ministry, a vast concourse of people followed him to hear the words of wisdom and healing from his lips. When the day began to wear on, the question arose as to how they were to be fed. One of his twelve disciples came to him and said: "Give the multitude leave to go to the villages and farms round about so that they can find lodging and food : we are in a desert country here." The Master at once saw that if the multitude spread out to the neighbouring farms and huts to scrounge for food they would strip the countryside bare like the locusts. For there were no less than five thousand of them to be fed. "It is for you to give them to eat," he said to the disciple who had come to him. The disciple answered: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." Then one of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, came and said to him : "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes : but what are they among so many?" The Master saw that

like this lad many had brought with them more than their need while others had none. "Put all you have into a basket," he said to the lad, "and let everyone else do likewise." When all the victuals were collected in one place, the story goes, Jesus made the whole assembly sit down in companies of fifty and had the victuals distributed to each according to his need. And, lo and behold, not only "all ate and had their fill but when what they left over was picked up, it filled twelve baskets!"

The miracle wrought by the practice of the principle of love, or voluntary sharing described in the parable of "five loaves and two fishes" has, Gandhiji held, a profound significance for us today. "I venture to suggest," he observed in one of his earliest speeches in India, "that it is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world." He did not want to dispossess anybody, he went on to say. "I should then be departing from the rule of Ahimsa. . . . But . . . I do say that . . . you and I have no right to anything that we really have until these . . . millions are clothed and fed better. You and I . . . must adjust our wants, and even undergo voluntary starvation in order that they may be nursed, fed and clothed."²⁸²

Gandhiji believed in the ideal of equal distribution. But when we start to put the ideal into practice, we are confronted with what Professor Haldane has called the inherent "inequality of man". The needs of different people vary. Equal distribution, therefore, said Gandhiji, cannot mean dead uniformity. The real implication of equal distribution is that "each man shall have the wherewithal to supply all his natural needs and no more. For example, if one man has a weak digestion and requires only a quarter of a pound of flour for his bread and another needs a pound, both should be in a position to satisfy their wants."²⁸³ "All men are born free and equal" is not true in the literal sense. It is true only in the sense that all have a moral right to equal opportunity. All have not equal talent; no two leaves on a tree are exactly alike. Some will, therefore, naturally have the ability to earn more than others.

It is of course possible to remove inequalities by "lopping off the tall poppies." This, however, cannot make the peasant equal to the prince. It leaves untouched the problem of recurring inequalities resulting from the natural disparity in the talents and aptitudes of various people. Besides, the moment we try to make men equal by coercion, they cease to be free.

Gandhiji did not want to cramp talent by preventing those who were endowed with superior talent from earning more, or by forcible expropriation to strip those who had more of their possessions. It

would be enough, he said, if they used their talent and the bulk of their riches not for themselves but as a trust for the good of society.

All have not the same capacity. It is, in the nature of things, impossible. For instance, all cannot have the same height, or colour or degree of intelligence etc.; therefore . . . some will have ability to earn more and others less. People with talents will have more, and they will utilise their talents for this purpose. If they utilise their talents kindly, they will be performing the work of the State (i.e. community). Such people exist as trustees, on no other terms. I would allow a man of intellect to earn more, I would not cramp his talent. But the bulk of his greater earnings must be used for the good of the State, just as the income of all earning sons of the father goes to the common family fund.²⁸⁴

Gandhiji based his "trusteeship" doctrine on a celebrated verse in the ancient Hindu philosophical scripture, *Ishopanishad*, which says: "All that is in the universe is pervaded by God. Renounce first, therefore, in order to enjoy. Covet not anybody's riches." In other words, everything must, in the first instance, be surrendered to God, and then out of it, one may use, not for selfish enjoyment, but for the service of God's creation, according to one's strict need, and no more. One would then not covet what belongs to another.

Sabhi bhoomi gopalki—all land belongs to the Lord—so runs an ancient Indian saying. No-one is nature's sole legatee. Even our physical constitution is inherited and our talents are largely a social product and, therefore, a part of our joint social heritage. Thus regarded, not only our material possessions but our talent both natural and acquired, our time, our physical body, even our life, are ours not in the absolute sense to be used or abused according to our whim or caprice, but as a trust to be husbanded and used strictly in His service, in other words in the service of society.

Being once asked by an Indian friend at a private gathering in England, "How can we serve India?" Gandhiji replied: "Put your talents in the service of the country instead of converting them into £. s. d. If you are a medical man, there is disease enough in India to need all your medical skill. If you are a lawyer, there are differences and quarrels enough in India. Instead of fomenting more trouble, patch up those quarrels and stop litigation. If you are an engineer, build model houses suited to the means and needs of our people and yet full of health and fresh air. There is nothing that you have learnt which cannot be turned to account." The friend who had asked the question was a Chartered Accountant. Continuing his answer Gandhiji said to him: "Come to India — I will give you enough work and also your hire—

four annas per day, which is surely much more than millions in India get.”²⁸⁵

Gandhiji was uncompromising in his view that if independent India was to set an example which would be the envy of the world, “all the *Bhangis*, doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants and others would get the same wages for an honest day’s work. Indian society may never reach the goal but it was the duty of every Indian to set his sail towards that goal and no other if India was to be a happy land.”²⁸⁶

This sounds pretty drastic. But in a statement of ideals, it cannot be otherwise. Gandhiji refused to water down his ideals. But as a practical idealist, he tempered the practice of his ideals by charity, or the application of the law of love. He never made the cross heavier than anybody’s capacity to bear.

“I am prepared to renounce my millions and give up my business to follow you; you have only to order,” said a multi-millionaire friend of Gandhiji to him at the outset of their acquaintance. “I do not want you to renounce either your millions or your business,” replied Gandhiji. “I want to make use of both for the service of the poor.”

“Why did you damp his ardour,” I asked Gandhiji afterwards. “He was sincere. You might have encouraged him in his lofty impulse.”

“You do not understand,” replied Gandhiji. “It is not so easy to make a total renunciation of one’s earthly possessions. I can vouch for this after my life-long striving to achieve this ideal. G. would have gladly done anything that I might have asked him to do, but it would not have come to him naturally. He is gifted with a unique talent for business. He would have felt out of his element in any other capacity and the country would have been the poorer for the loss of his God-given talent. To do business is not in itself immoral. It is possible for one to realise the highest by following one’s *swadharma*—natural avocation—in a spirit of service. By imitating the conduct of another although it may appear to be more excellent, we get to nowhere.”

And so he could count among his supporters multi-millionaires and owners of vast acres who in different degrees not only placed at his disposal their purse but their talent and goodwill, too, for the service of the poor. Rulers of States voluntarily agreed to a curtailment of their absolute powers, privileges and privy purses. This could not have been achieved otherwise without precipitating a class struggle, which would have created more problems than it solved and made the remedy worse than the disease.

As trustees, said Gandhiji, the owners would be allowed to retain a reasonable commission for themselves in recognition of their service or usefulness to society. The rate of commission in the transition period could be left to them to be determined on a reasonable basis in consultation with society. The actual amount would not by itself, within certain limits, matter very much provided they accepted the underlying

principle and agreed to surrender their existing titles based on absolute ownership for a trusteeship basis. In due course, when the vast bulk of the people were converted to this principle, trusteeship would be embodied in the law of the land and its operation, including the issue of succession, and inheritance of wealth—acquired or otherwise—would be regulated by the State in accordance with the principle of trusteeship. In fact very little of State interference would be necessary as *ex-hypothesi* the principle would have already been accepted by society at large.

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Is trusteeship then a substitute for the abolition of individual ownership? 'No', said Gandhiji. It is the means for the attainment of that goal. More, it anticipates that goal.

Complete non-possession is an abstraction. It can never be fully realised. In the absolute sense, as has already been noted, even our physical body is a possession. Are the evils of inequality then to go unchecked? Trusteeship provides the answer to this problem of "residuary ownership".

There is a distinction between possession and possessiveness. The evil lies not in possession as such but in possessiveness. Even if all the owners were forcibly dispossessed, the acquisitive or possessive instinct would remain. It is this which is the root cause of conflict. It can be transmuted into an instrument of social good by the application of the principle of trusteeship.

In the reverse, is trusteeship a mere stop-gap arrangement that would cease to have any further use when individual ownership has been abolished? "No", again, is the answer. For even after the existing inequalities of wealth have been removed, the problem of recurring inequalities resulting from the varying capacity and talent of different individuals will remain. Unless outstanding talent is fostered and held in trust to be used in the interest of society, it will again give rise to a privileged class, no matter under what name or garb. As the only answer to the problem of recurring inequalities arising from "residuary ownership", the doctrine of trusteeship has a perennial value and use.

"When transformation of private property into public property has been achieved by the application of the doctrine of trusteeship," Gandhiji was asked, "will the ownership vest in the State, which is an instrument of violence, or in associations of a voluntary character like village communes and municipalities, which may of course derive their final authority from State-made laws?"

"That question," replied Gandhiji, "involves some confusion of

thought. Legal ownership in the transformed condition shall vest in the trustee, not in the State. It is to avoid confiscation that the doctrine of trusteeship comes into play, retaining for society the ability of the original owner in his own right. Nor do I hold that the State must always be based on violence. It might be so in theory but it is possible to conceive a State which in practice would for the most part be based on non-violence.”²⁸⁷

“How would the successor of a trustee be determined? Will he only have the right of proposing a name, the right of finalisation being vested in the State?”

“The choice,” replied Gandhiji, “should be given to the original owner, who becomes the first trustee, but it must be finalised by the State. Such arrangement puts a check on the State as well as on the individual.”²⁸⁸

This did not mean, Gandhiji explained, that pending necessary legislation the transformation of the capitalists into trustees would be left to the sweet will of the capitalists. If they proved impervious to the appeal to reason, the weapon of non-violent non-cooperation would be brought into play. “Force of circumstances will compel the reform unless they court utter destruction. When Panchayat Raj is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do.”²⁸⁹ For instance, if a landlord refused to accept the principle of trusteeship, agricultural labour would boycott his cultivation and public opinion would not allow black-leg labour to be brought in or force to be used against the tenants or the boycotting labourers, so long as they remained strictly non-violent. In Gandhiji’s words: “Suppose a landowner exploits his tenants and mulcts them of the fruit of their toil by appropriating it to his own use. When they expostulate with him he does not listen and raises objections. . . . The tenants or those who have espoused their cause and have influence will make an appeal to his wife to expostulate with her husband. Supposing further that he listens to nobody or that his wife and children combine against the tenants, they will not submit. They will quit if asked to do so but they will make it clear that the land belongs to him who tills it. The owner cannot till all the land himself and he will have to give in to their just demands. It may, however, be that the tenants are replaced by others. Agitation short of violence will then continue till the replacing tenants see their error and make common cause with the evicted tenants.”²⁹⁰

The same holds good in respect of industry. An outstanding source of tension in the present-day world is the struggle between labour and capital. The reason why in the fight against the capitalistic exploitation labour very often fails, said Gandhiji, is that instead of sterilising the power of capital by refusing to be party to its own exploitation, labour wants to seize capital and becomes capitalist in a worse sense. Thereby it puts itself at a disadvantage. The capitalists are better equipped

for the struggle, better organised and better entrenched. They find in the ranks of labour candidates aspiring for the capitalistic role, and make use of them to suppress labour. On the day that labour realised that ultimately it is not pieces of so-called precious metal that constitute true capital but productive, useful labour and learnt effectively to wield the weapon of non-violent non-cooperation, the citadel of exploitation would fall.

Gandhiji envisaged industry as a joint enterprise of labour and capital, in which both "owners" and "workers" were co-trustees for society. Instead of engaging in a class-war and each thinking in terms of its exclusive rights, therefore, they should, he said, concentrate on due performance of their respective duty in terms of the service of society. Rights would accrue from duty well performed. If the capitalists or owners of industry did not discharge their trust properly, not only would it be the right but the moral duty of labour as a co-trustee to withhold its cooperation peacefully; in other words strike work.

Gandhiji's philosophy of strike in labour-capital disputes rests on the principle of reciprocal rights and duties. He told labour that since they were as much owners of industry as the capitalists, as co-trustees they must regard the interests of industry as a whole as their own and direct their attack against the corruption, injustice, inefficiency and short-sighted greed of the owners. This enabled him to appeal to and mobilise the better sense of the owners of industry to his side. His insistence upon non-violence disarmed their fear. He regarded it as a fundamental condition of a successful strike that the demands of the strikers should be clear, feasible and just, and not work to the detriment of social good. This last enabled him to enlist the sympathy of the public on the side of labour.

To ensure non-violence on the part of the strikers and to increase their staying power, Gandhiji recommended that the strikers should acquire skill in a variety of manual crafts so that they did not have to depend altogether upon the strike fund to keep themselves and their families going during a prolonged strike.²⁹¹ "A working knowledge of a variety of occupations," he held, "is to the working class what metal is to the capitalist."²⁹² It gives to the worker the strength and versatility which his fluid assets give to the capitalist. The readiness and ability of the strikers to perform socially useful labour also forges a bond of sympathy between them and the public and provides a basis for non-violent organisation of labour. During a strike it keeps up their morale as nothing else.

Would not "the legal fiction of trusteeship", as a cynic put it, only serve to give to the institution of private ownership a new lease of life? Why not put all property straightaway under State ownership since the accumulation of capital is essentially the fruit of exploitation, i.e. violence? Gandhiji was once asked this question. He replied that whilst

he agreed that the accumulation of capital by the individual in the present set up is largely the fruit of exploitation, i.e. violence, he preferred the violence of the individual to State violence as the lesser of the two evils. "The State represents violence in a concentrated and organised form. The individual has a soul, but the State is a soulless machine. . . . It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the coils of violence itself and fail to develop non-violence at any time."²⁹³ Again, while many instances could be cited, where men had adopted trusteeship, there was none, he argued, "where the State has really lived for the poor."²⁹⁴ He would therefore favour "not a centralisation of power in the hands of the State, but an extension of the sense of trusteeship as, in my opinion, the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State."²⁹⁵ However, if it was unavoidable, he would support "a minimum of State ownership".

Why not conscript the surplus wealth through a steeply graded system of taxation? Gandhiji's answer to this is that certainly the State can conscript wealth but it cannot conscript the talent and goodwill of the privileged class. Trusteeship, on the other hand, while it gives capitalism no quarter, it gives to the capitalists the moral freedom to develop and use their talents for the service of society and thereby makes it possible to annex their goodwill for the amelioration of the masses. There is nothing that can be realised by a violent revolution and is intrinsically good but can be achieved in an equal or even greater measure by the application of the principle of trusteeship. In addition, trusteeship avoids the evils of violence, regimentation and suppression of individual liberty. Even if large sectors of industry were nationalised and put under State ownership, the existence of individual enterprise alongside of it under a trusteeship system would provide a healthy antidote to slackness, inefficiency, corruption, lack of enterprise and bureaucratic autocracy which very often characterise State enterprise. Trusteeship alone thus provides a possible escape from the dilemma: "Make men free and they become unequal, make them equal and they cease to be free."

Could not the trusteeship doctrine be used to justify one nation constituting itself into a "trustee" of another? The reply is that "trusteeship" is a means for remedying recurring inequalities that are inevitable in nature, not an excuse for creating inequalities artificially, to be able to play at "trusteeship". That would be a travesty of its true meaning and purpose.

There is yet another reason why Gandhiji was in favour of trusteeship. He was strongly opposed to increasing occasions for State interference in the regulation of society. He attached the greatest importance to "moral freedom". He wanted reform to grow from within. "I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear," he said, "because, while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation,

it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress.”²⁹⁶

Jung has referred to the danger of increase of the “fiction which one calls the State”, viz. that State is “a sort of superindividual endowed with inexhaustible power and resourcefulness” which can accomplish what nobody would expect from an individual. “The dangerous incline leading down to mass psychology,” he observes, “begins with this plausible thinking in big numbers and powerful organisations, where the individual dwindles away to mere nothingness. . . . Everything that exceeds a certain human size evokes equally inhuman powers in man’s unconscious” and thereby unleashes the “totalitarian demons”.²⁹⁷ Gandhiji was, therefore, against vesting more power in the State than was absolutely necessary, or encouraging people to think that their salvation could come through some agency outside themselves. On the contrary he told them that the State gave back to the people only what it received from them: they were the source of the State’s bounty. They must, therefore, realise their moral freedom without which economic and political freedom is incomplete.

20

During our last detention at Poona in 1942, I had the opportunity to discuss at length with Gandhiji various aspects of his ideal of trusteeship, and how it could be realised in our present-day world. In the course of our talk one day he remarked: “The only democratic way of achieving it today is by cultivating opinion in its favour.”

I put it to him that perhaps the reason why he had presented trusteeship basis to the owning class was that while non-violence could command many sacrifices from the people, it was not reasonable to expect anyone to present his own head in a charger. “So instead of asking the owning class to do the impossible, you presented them with a reasonable and practicable alternative.”

Gandhiji: “I refuse to admit that non-violence knows any limit to the sacrifice that it can demand or command. The doctrine of trusteeship stands on its own merits.”

Pyarelal: “Surely, you do not mean that the change would depend upon the sufferance of the owning class and we shall have to wait till their conversion is complete? If social transformation is effected by a slow, gradual process, it will kill the revolutionary fervour which an abrupt break with the past creates. That is why our Marxist friends say that a true social revolution can come only through a proletarian dictatorship. You too have taught us that in politics reformism kills revolution. Does this not equally apply to social change? Anyway, if non-violence has the power to induce the opponent even to immolate

himself for the sake of a higher principle, as you maintain that it can, why cannot we get the owning class to renounce their vast possessions? You concede that vast possessions are today largely the result of exploitation? Why bring in trusteeship? Many people honestly believe, it will prove to be no more than a make-believe. Or is it that, after all, there is a limit to the power of non-violence?"

Gandhiji: "Perhaps you have the example of Russia in mind. Wholesale expropriation of the owning class and distribution of its assets among the people there did create a tremendous amount of revolutionary fervour. But I claim that ours will be an even bigger revolution. We must not underrate the business talent and know-how which the owning class have acquired through generations of experience and specialisation. Free use of it would accrue to the people under my plan. So long as we have no power, conversion is our weapon by necessity, but after we get power, conversion will be our weapon of choice. Conversion must precede legislation. Legislation in the absence of conversion remains a dead letter. As an illustration, we have today the power to enforce rules of sanitation but we can do nothing with it because the public is not ready."

Pyarelal: "You say conversion must precede reform. Whose conversion? If you mean the conversion of the people, they are ready even today. If, on the other hand, you mean that of the owning class, we may as well wait till the Greek Kalends."

Gandhiji: "I mean the conversion of both."

Noting the look of surprise on my face, he proceeded: "You see, if the owning class does not accept the trusteeship basis voluntarily, its conversion must come under the pressure of public opinion. For that public opinion is not yet sufficiently organised."

Going back to what he had said only a little while ago, I asked: "What do you mean by power?"

Gandhiji: "By power I mean voting power for the people—so broad-based that the will of the majority can be given effect to."

Pyarelal: "Can the masses at all come into power by parliamentary activity?"

Gandhiji: "Not by parliamentary activity *alone*. My reliance ultimately is on the power of non-violent non-cooperation, which I have been trying to build up for the last twenty-two years."

Pyarelal: "Is the capture of power possible through non-violence? Our Socialist friends say that they have now been convinced of the matchless potency of non-violence—up to a point. But they say, they do not see how it can enable the people to seize power. You also have said the same thing. Therein, argue the Socialists, lies the inadequacy of non-violence."

Gandhiji: "In a way they are right. By its very nature, non-violence cannot 'seize' power, nor can that be its goal. *But non-violence can do more;*

it can effectively control and guide power without capturing the machinery of Government. That is its beauty. There is an exception of course. If the non-violent non-cooperation of the people is so complete that the administration ceases to function or if the administration crumbles under the impact of a foreign invasion and a vacuum results, the people's representatives will then step in and fill it. Theoretically that is possible."

It reminded me of what Gandhiji had once told Mirabeau: "Non-violence does not seize power. It does not even seek power; power accrues to it."²⁹⁸

Continuing his argument Gandhiji said: "Moreover, I do not agree that Government cannot be carried on except by the use of violence."

Pyarelal: "Does not the very concept of the State imply the use of power?"

Gandhiji: "Yes. But the use of power need not necessarily be violent. A father wields power over his children; he may even punish but not by inflicting violence. The most effective exercise of power is that which irks least. Power rightly exercised must sit light as a flower; no-one should feel the weight of it. The people accepted the authority of the Congress willingly. I was on more than one occasion invested with the absolute power of dictatorship. But everybody knew that my power rested on their willing acceptance. They could set me aside at any time and I would have stepped aside without a murmur. In the Khilafat days my authority, or the authority of the Congress, did not irk anybody. The Ali Brothers used to call me *sarkar*. Yet they knew they had me in their pocket. What was true about me or the Congress then can be true about the Government also."

I conceded that a non-violent State or even a non-violent minority dictatorship—a dictatorship resting on the moral authority of a few—was possible in theory. But it called for a terrible self-discipline, self-denial and penance. In the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavata*, there is the description of a non-violent law-giver or head of a State. He is a person who has severed all domestic ties; he is unaffected by fear or favour, anger or attachment; he is the personification of humility and self-effacement. Through constant discipline he has inured his body to all conceivable rigours of the weather, fatigue and want. But suppose, the author poses the question, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. If through old age or illness his constitution is undermined so that he can no longer withstand the rigours of his penance, what then? To that hypothetical question the unrelenting answer given is: Let him in that event mount a pyre which he himself has made and immolate himself rather than indulge in weak self-pity and mollycoddle himself. "Personally I agree," I concluded, "that such a person alone is fit to be a dictator under non-violence. If anyone is frightened

by such a description, let him look at the Russians fighting in temperatures below 40 degrees frost. Why should we expect a softer solution under non-violence? Rather we should be prepared for more hardships."

Gandhiji confirmed that under non-violence people have to be prepared for heavier sacrifices if only because the goal aimed at is higher. "There is no short-cut to salvation," he said.

"That would mean," interpolated my sister, "that only a Jesus, a Mohammad or a Buddha can be the head of a non-violent State."

Gandhiji demurred. "That is not correct. Prophets and supermen are born only once in an age. But if even a single individual realises the ideal of Ahimsa in its fullness, he covers and redeems the whole society. Once Jesus had blazed the trail, his twelve disciples could carry on his mission without his presence. It needed the perseverance and genius of so many generations of scientists to discover the laws of electricity but today everybody, even children, use electric power in their daily life. Similarly, it will not always need a perfect being to administer an ideal State, once it has come into being. What is needed is a thorough social awakening to begin with. The rest will follow. To take an instance nearer home, I have presented to the working class the truth that true capital is not silver or gold but the labour of their hands and feet and their intelligence. Once labour develops that awareness, it would not need my presence to enable it to make use of the power that it will release."

He ended up by saying that if only we could make people conscious of their power—the power of non-violent non-cooperation—the realisation of the ideal of trusteeship would follow as surely as morning follows night.

21

On our release from prison, we took up the question where we had left it in the Detention Camp. Two senior members of the Ashram, Kishorlal Mashruwala and Narahari Parikh, joined. Professor Dantwala from Bombay had sent the draft of a simple, practical trusteeship formula which he had prepared. It was placed before Gandhiji, who made a few changes in it. The final draft, as amended by him, read as follows:

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

2. It does not recognise any right of private ownership of property except so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
4. Thus, under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of society.
5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that could be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.
6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

It was decided to release the formula to the Press. But on second thoughts we felt that before publication it might be shown to G. D. Birla who was favourably inclined to the doctrine of trusteeship. A copy was accordingly sent to him. He welcomed it but proposed that in order that the whole effort might not begin and end with the publication of the formula, he should first canvass some fellow-capitalists so that the announcement about their acceptance should be made along with the publication of the draft.

No further communication from him, however, followed. Perhaps he met with discouraging response from those whom he had approached. But a great idea rooted in the genius and hoary tradition of a people never dies. Gandhiji's idea is today reborn and is being pursued with spectacular success by Vinoba Bhave. It promises to usher in the "thorough social awakening" of which Gandhiji had prophetically talked on the 13th December, 1942, in the Detention Camp at Poona, and to become the spear-head of a non-violent revolution whose implications reach far and wide. Millions of acres of land and thousands of villages have been donated as willing gifts for the use of the land-hungry toiling poor. The original limited objective of asking for and obtaining land gifts has since been expanded by the addition of various other kinds of contribution envisaged under the trusteeship principle, e.g. donation of cash, of free labour, specialised knowledge or technical skill, and finally the donation of one's life in dedication to the service of the masses.

Donation of whole villages to the movement by the collective decision of the villagers constitutes an important milestone in the development of the movement. Bhoodan is not an end in itself. It is only the means to an end. It is not merely the transfer of land from one hand to another that constitutes the core of the Bhoodan revolution but development of the full function of land which this makes possible. A farming community may be prosperous but when this prosperity is secured by the import of cheap fertilisers, or food for animals and men, not necessarily below the financial cost, but below the "biological cost" of production, the farmer's gain represents the loss of soil fertility somewhere else. In the case of a completely self-contained community, which produces all its supplies in food for men, animals and crops, any surplus that can be disposed of represents not only clear gain to the producers but also to the country and to the world at large. Self-sufficiency in food is justified only when it makes for increased food production for world as a whole, and food of better quality. If it fails to achieve that end, there is something wrong with its organisation. Utilisation of night-soil, farm-yard waste and refuse of every kind by composting would constitute the starting point and rock-bottom foundation of the effort for the regeneration of soil and attainment of self-sufficiency.

The chronic poverty and backwardness of the Indian village is principally due to the triple drain to which it has long been subjected, viz. the drain of raw-material, the monetary drain and the drain of talent due to migration of the flower of the village community to the towns. The village cannot regain its pristine prosperity and vigour so long as this triple drain remains unchecked. No-one puts money into pockets that have holes. The holes must be stopped first.

The drain of raw material is caused by the need to pay Government dues, or to pay for goods and services of urban origin. The *Gramdan* villages will therefore have to take every care to learn to do so far as possible with village products only and to keep out city manufactures. To stop the monetary drain they will organise a system of rural health services. The emphasis in these will be on prevention rather than cure, on the inculcation of right health behaviour rather than on wonder cures of modern medicine and surgery. Nature-cure, supplemented by simple drugs and medicinal herbs, which the people will be encouraged to grow in the village itself, will provide all the medical care that the vast bulk of them may need. The personnel for these health services will be recruited from and trained in the villages themselves. Donations of specialised knowledge and skill by those who have them in an ample measure will provide the know-how. There may not be any big hospitals with costly up-to-date paraphernalia. It will be enough to have one well-equipped central hospital in each area linked to a chain of rural health clinics, where

locally trained personnel will treat the vast majority of simple cases under the guidance and supervision of an experienced peripatetic physician. Rural universities organised on Basic Education lines will set up faculties not in academic branches of learning but in such practical subjects as agriculture, dairying, sericulture and bee-keeping, village engineering, tanning, sanitation, rural health and rural medicine, pedagogy and social sciences etc. to train workers needed for rural reconstruction.

Everybody will have employment to enable him to pay in kind or in labour for medical care for himself and his family and for education for his children. This coupled with a system of collective insurance for old age, sickness etc. backed by the resources of the village community will obviate the need for high cash salaries.

If there is not enough donated land for everybody, those who are without land will be helped to engage in the exploitation of other natural resources, e.g. salt manufacture, where facilities for it exist. Nature is as much "land" as soil. The initial capital for such occupations will be found from *sampatti-dan* or donations of wealth.

A regional unit, or block of villages, organised on these lines will ban the erection of rice-hullers, flour mills, and power-driven oil presses within its boundaries and get the existing ones eliminated so that the rural population does not lose the essential advantage of its way of life in the form of fresh, whole, unadulterated foods. Similarly, they will not countenance turning into cash of dairy products or of fruit and vegetables grown in the village by canning or otherwise for export so long as everybody has not had a sufficiency of these. Only after this has been ensured to everybody will they think of exporting the surplus—fresh, cured or canned.

It should be possible for people in such an environment to build themselves out of locally available material neat, airy, spacious huts, with a smokeless kitchen and a flower, vegetable and fruit orchard attached to each according to a carefully laid out plan. There will be proper drainage for individual homes and for the village, wide alleys, neat village roads—not necessarily motorable—and well-kept inland waterways where these exist, cheap rather than quick transport being the desideratum of village life.

With villages thus renovated, beautified and turned into busy hives of social, cultural and economic activity, providing ample opportunity for self-expression and aesthetic enjoyment so that a healthy, cultured, well-rounded life for oneself and one's children is brought within the reach of all, the money motive will lose much of its drive and the temptation for the flower of the village to migrate or for the village people to send their children to the cities for education or earning a living will be greatly lessened if not altogether eliminated.

In a biologically whole and self-contained farming community,

production will be governed not by business considerations but by the sole consideration of building up vitality. In order to achieve independence of money-economy, a self-contained community will ask the Government to be allowed to pay its land dues in the form of a fixed share of the gross produce as a matter of elementary justice, and other dues in kind or in labour. A wise Government would not be averse to favourably considering such a request since this would enable grain to be stocked in the villages and provide an insurance against scarcity by whatever cause induced. These local stocks of grain would also enable the authorities to meet any expenditure that they might have to incur in the rural areas without drawing upon its reserve of hard currency which would thus become available for meeting external needs.

Having attained self-sufficiency in the matter of its essential needs and freedom from money economy, these rural communities or regional units will set about to organise their own system of watch and ward, based on the principle of Satyagraha, for the maintenance of the internal security of the village. A number of villages combining together for the purpose will organise collective security for the whole block on the same basis. Panchayat justice backed by non-violent social organisation will effectively replace and put an end to litigation in the law courts.

Donation of villages or *Gramdan* thus provides an opportunity, especially where donated villages form solid blocks, to try out all the techniques devised by Gandhiji from time to time to enable the toiling masses in the villages to retain and enjoy their full share of nature's bounty and the fruits of their toil against any combination of vested interests, however well entrenched, and powerful, and to realise on a regional scale, the full picture of a non-violent, non-exploiting egalitarian society.

A compact sizable area where community life has been organised on these lines will have created for itself a moral basis to claim exemption from being involved in a crushing system of taxation meant to sustain a top-heavy administration with its ever-growing parasitic hierarchy of privilege holders,²⁹⁹ its suicidal race for armaments and grandiose schemes, more concerned with production than with the producers, which can have no significance for a self-governing, self-contained and self-sustained community in which a wageless system of economy provides to everybody who is willing to exert himself all the necessities of life "free like God's air, sunshine and water", and in which neither the police nor the military nor the law courts have any function.

The question may however be asked: Would any Government tolerate this? Can any constituted Government be expected to co-operate in its own liquidation? The answer is: Why not, if the rulers

are pledged to hold power and use it solely on behalf of and for the people? "There will never be a really free and enlightened State," observed Thoreau, "until the State comes to recognise the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbour; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbours and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen."³⁰⁰

To realise this ideal of a self-sustained, self-governed, non-violent rural community in India's villages, Gandhiji envisaged a special type of worker. He would approximate the description of a Satyagrahi worker given by him in a slightly different context: "He would be bound with the poorest in the village by ties of service. He would constitute himself the scavenger, the nurse, the arbitrator of disputes, and the teacher of the children of the village. Everyone, young and old, would know him; though a householder he would be leading a life of restraint; he would make no distinction between his and his neighbour's children; he would own nothing but would hold what wealth he has in trust for others, and would therefore spend out of it just sufficient for his barest needs. His needs would, as far as possible, approximate those of the poor, he would harbour no untouchability, and would therefore inspire people of all castes and creeds to approach him with confidence."³⁰¹

Such a worker would further "always endeavour to come up to, whenever he falls short of the ideal, fill in the gaps in his education, will not waste a single moment. His house will be a busy hive of useful activities centering round spinning. His will be a well ordered household."³⁰²

Though he might be all alone to begin with, such a worker, said Gandhiji, if he had the requisite degree of faith, intelligence, industry and perseverance "will not find himself single-handed, for long. The village will unconsciously follow him. But whether they do or not, at a time of emergency he will, single-handed, effectively deal with it or die in the attempt. But I firmly hold that he will have converted a number of others."³⁰³

It was Gandhiji's ambition to play the role of that solitary Satyagrahi worker in Sevagram. Asked whether he had succeeded in creating any inhabitant of that village into a Satyagrahi of his conception, he replied, he did not know, but he hoped that some of them were "unconsciously shaping themselves as such." As to Sevagram shaping into

the ideal village of his dreams, he remarked: "I know that the work is as difficult as to make of India an ideal country. . . . But if one can produce one ideal village, he will have provided a pattern not only for the whole country but perhaps for the whole world. More than this a seeker may not aspire after."³⁰⁴

Out of such effort will emerge something which will be unlike anything that the world has so far known, "a new wholeness or harmony in the world of life, which is now so broken up and divided against itself."³⁰⁵ Its influence will spread far and wide and, may be, even across national frontiers.

SETTING DEMOCRACY ON THE MARCH

I

THOSE WHO have read Carlyle's history of the French Revolution will recall a remarkable passage in which the author has described how after "six long years of insurrection and tribulation . . . struggling and . . . daring . . . destroying of Bastilles, discomfiting of Brunswicks, fronting of Principalities and Powers" the portion of the poor proletariat of Paris was only a plate containing each "three grilled herrings, sprinkled with shorn onions, wetted with a little vinegar; to this add some morsel of boiled prunes, and lentils swimming in a clear sauce. . . . Seine water, rushing plenteous by, will supply the deficiency."¹ Their allotment of daily bread had sunk to one ounce and a half. Even so, "wide-waving, doleful are the Baker's Queues; Farmers' houses are becoming pawnbrokers' shops."² Not even during the Reign of Terror had they suffered more. Yet at this very time "Salons Soupers not Fraternal" were beaming with most "suitable effulgence, very singular in colour" and the moneyed Citoyen of Paris was pondering "in what elegantest style he shall dress himself!"³

To many who beheld men, women and even children fighting for a place in the long queues before ration shops in the capital of the Indian Union during the winter of 1947-48, these scenes must have seemed reminiscent of the baker's queues of post-revolutionary Paris described by Carlyle.

But then in France the millennium had come through violence and the revolution had negated itself by virtue of its association with incompatible means. "Thus men break the axe with which they have done hateful things; the axe itself having grown hateful."⁴ In India, independence had come largely through the people's bloodless struggle. Such independence should have enabled them to solve their problems that had baffled solution under foreign rule.

As it was, these problems became even more acute after independence. Corruption was never more rampant. The administration continued to be carried on essentially in the same style as before and the popular Government instead of striking an original line continued to follow, and in some respects even improved upon, the discredited

old tradition which not only Congressmen but all nationalists had condemned before.

There was the same woodenness, red-tapism, and waste. While in post-war England and France they were adopting rigorous austerity budgets and slashing all unnecessary expenditure, the Union Government in the exuberance of its new-found independence was doing the opposite.

"We are going in for British extravagance which the country cannot afford," wrote Gandhiji to Pandit Nehru in one of his letters.⁵ A few days later he again wrote: "I feel that the Viceroy should be allowed to go to an unpretentious house and that the present palace should be more usefully used."⁶ Pandit Nehru agreed. Mountbatten was willing — even enthusiastic. "May I say," wrote Gandhiji to Mountbatten, "how deeply I have appreciated your wish to go to an unpretentious house as the chosen Governor-General of the millions of the half-famished villagers of the nation. I hope it will be possible to carry out the wishes."⁷ But, explained Pandit Nehru in a letter written on the same day, "difficulty in finding suitable accommodation and making arrangements for changing over, when we are so busy" stood in the way.⁸ That could not have been the whole reason, for even after the installation of the Indian Governor-General, no change was made either in the residence or the style of its upkeep. We were even told that the standard maintained at the Government House was considered "inadequate" by foreign dignitaries.

Gandhiji was disappointed but he distilled "the soul of goodness" even out of his disappointment. During the hectic days, when Delhi had become the City of the Dead, he was, in the course of a meeting with the Governor-General, shown how the Government House provided a quiet retreat for the Emergency Committee to meet and hold its deliberations away from the riots and clamour of the streets. Recalling his earlier advice to Mountbatten, he remarked to him: "Never mind the reason why you did not move to a smaller house. When I see the Emergency Committee at work in the undisturbed tranquillity of this place, I say to myself: 'Perhaps God was wiser than us all. For it is but right that the Emergency Committee should be able to meet in a place where wise decisions can be taken in the right atmosphere'."⁹

As a vindication of God's wisdom, which turns even men's errors to good account, this was all right. But it provided no vindication for the ways of man, or turn what was intrinsically bad into good. Gandhiji continued to note with growing uneasiness the unchecked administrative waste and lavish expenditure, when millions were suffering untold hardships. Nothing escaped his watchful eye—the expenditure incurred by embassies abroad; furniture installed in the residences of Cabinet Ministers; the conduct of the nation's representatives in the capitals of foreign countries, and so on. From time to time he sounded a note

of warning. "The accounts I receive about you," he wrote to one of our Ambassadors abroad, "show that you are not living the life that India would expect of you. Can it be?"

He was sure, he remarked to a friend at Delhi in the summer of 1947, that if all Ministers voluntarily adopted the ideal of simplicity, they would capture the imagination of the world and win the people's confidence which nothing and nobody would be able to shake or destroy. But instead, their Governors and Ministers needed palatial buildings, an imposing array of body-guards, and liveried khidmutgars. Dinner parties were regarded as an essential part of the gubernatorial ceremonial. "I fail to understand all this. What is more detrimental to the country's prestige—lack of food, clothing and shelter for the countless people of India, or living in a simple style in unostentatious small houses, instead of costly, imposing piles out of keeping with their surroundings, by our Ministers and Governors?"

If he had his way, he went on to say, he would immediately stop the practice of holding dinner parties in the Government House "when the people are experiencing acute food shortage." He would provide the Ministers with cosy, small, unostentatious houses but no armed body-guards either to Congress Governors or to Ministers, "who are committed to non-violence as their policy. And if as a result some of them should get killed, I would not mind." In *Harijan* he wrote:

An Indian Governor should, in his own person and in his surroundings, be a teetotaller. Without this, prohibition of the fiery liquid is well-nigh inconceivable.

He and his surroundings should represent hand-spinning as a visible token of identification with the dumb millions of India, a token of the necessity of "bread labour" and organised Non-violence as against organised violence on which the society of today seems to be based.

He must dwell in a cottage accessible to all, though easily shielded from gaze, if he is to do efficient work. The British Governor naturally represented British might. For him and his was erected a fortified residence—a palace to be occupied by him and his numerous vassals who sustained his Empire. The Indian prototype may keep somewhat pretentious buildings for receiving princes and ambassadors of the world. For these, (they) being guests of the Governor, should constitute an education in what "Even Unto This Last"—equality of all—should mean in concrete terms. For him no expensive furniture, foreign or indigenous. Plain living and high thinking must be his motto, not to adorn his entrance but to be exemplified in daily life.

For him there can be no untouchability in any form whatsoever, no caste or creed or colour distinction. He must represent

the best of all religions and all things Eastern or Western. Being a citizen of India, he must be a citizen of the world. . . . Thus lived . . . the Master of Eton in his residence in the midst of and surrounded by the sons of the Lords and Nabobs of the British Isles. Will the Governors of India of the famished millions do less? . . .

One would expect that the Britishers who have been chosen by Indian representatives as Governors and who have taken the oath of fealty to India and her millions would endeavour as far as possible to live the life an Indian Governor is expected to live. They will represent the best that their country has to give to India and the world.¹⁰

Congress leaders had been fighters in their time. But they lacked administrative experience when they stepped into office. There were brilliant exceptions, especially at the top, who made up by the sheer versatility of their genius their lack of previous training in administration. But on the whole, when they took up office, they found themselves new to the task. The only thing that stood between them and chaos was the administrative machine set up by the British. They began to lean heavily upon the British trained services—secretaries, departmental heads and so on—and became their ardent admirers. Some of them even took to imitating their ways and became intolerant of any criticism of their officers by their erstwhile comrades-in-arms—the field workers. A distance grew up between the two.

This was the price that India had to pay for the continuity of administration. It ensured a smooth transition and the country was spared the inconveniences of a temporary dislocation, perhaps a spell of chaos. But it prolonged the agony of the old system of rule. The alternative would have been to make a complete break with the past and start building anew from below. The disturbances and cataclysms preceding and following independence left hardly any breathing time for this. All that they could by a supreme effort, manage was to keep their heads above the onrushing tide of chaos, which threatened to engulf them and the ship of the State.

In academic brilliance, patriotism, and spirit of service, the members of the services individually were second perhaps to none. It was no fault of theirs that they represented the outlook and characteristics peculiar to their class. A fearful gulf yawned between them and the people. They were out of touch, and one is afraid, out of sympathy with the outlook and the way of life of the millions in India's villages. They were a bureaucracy and could function only as such. Their mastery of the administrative routine did not qualify them for building up democracy from the foundation.

The Union Government, after the long history of repression and

frustration under the British rule, developed early a weakness—by no means peculiar to it—for State planning. There was a plethora of ambitious plans and blue-prints—an impatience to achieve prosperity and power by following “push-button” methods. The *elite* and the intellectual urban class from which the bulk of the leadership and services were drawn, went all out for it. This kind of planning has an irresistible fascination for the town-bred intellectuals. It enables privilege to be equated with patriotism and progress with the satisfaction of urban values and the sophisticated way of life in which they have grown up and which in consequence have grown upon them. The rural masses will have ample opportunities to jack themselves up to the urban level of culture and civilisation, by providing voluntary labour. In brief, it means political and social domination of the town, and power and much coveted perquisites for the *elite*, who constitute the ruling class. Even so, some British bureaucrats in the early eighties of the last century used to style themselves as “Socialists”, and to point to the vast irrigation and communications systems of India, created by the British, as a triumph of “State socialism in action”! One of them in a publication under the Henry George Society later actually described the notorious land tax, which was a tax on sweat and toil, as a vindication of Henry George’s principle of “single tax”!

The Congress had in the past denounced the evil of paternalistic rule under the *ma-bap* British Government. It had killed the people’s initiative, deepened their inertia and habit of helpless dependence on an outside authority for any amelioration of their condition. But when Congress leaders themselves became the Government, they assumed under the fashionable label of “Welfare State” the very role which they had previously denounced. They were convinced that, whatever might have been the case under foreign rule, with them in power everything would turn out well. Any suggestion to the contrary was resented as an aspersion on their past record of patriotism and service. Gandhiji felt uneasy. The universal experience is that where there is increasing dependence on the State, its inevitable result is that “the people become a herd of sheep, always relying on a shepherd to drive them on to good pastures; the shepherd’s staff soon becomes a rod of iron, and the shepherds turn into wolves.”¹¹

Granting that the Congress leaders, who had grown up in the tradition of the freedom struggle, might during their tenure of office, or in their lifetime, succeed in keeping under check some of the worst evils of bureaucratisation and the totalitarian trend inherent in central planning, what guarantee was there that their successors who would grow up under a different tradition would not succumb to the system of which they were a part? Is not the system always more than the man? Gandhiji was uncompromisingly opposed to the extension of the sphere of State activity under a national welfare State no less than under a

benevolent foreign bureaucracy. "Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of Government control whether it is foreign Government or whether it is national," he had written. "Swaraj Government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life."¹² And again: "Where administration is in foreign hands, whatever comes to the people comes from top and thus they become more and more dependent. Where it is broad-based on popular will, everything goes from bottom upward and hence it lasts. It is good-looking and strengthens the people."¹³

It is not possible for the *elite* to become rural-minded and think and plan in terms of the poorest living in the villages, unless they themselves go and live in their midst and make their own way of life commensurate with theirs, any more than it was for the French Bourbon Princess to understand why the Paris mob did not eat cakes when she was told they were shouting for bread. The habit, conscious or unconscious, of class thinking sticks to us. Our environment conditions us. Gandhiji had long made himself *declassé* and deliberately renounced the privileges and prerogatives of the intellectual urban class sanctified under the name of "progress". He had assiduously tried to become a villager in his outlook and way of life. It was characteristic of him that when Lord Lothian, later British Ambassador in the U. S. A., sought an interview with him in 1937, he invited Lord Lothian to come and see him in his Ashram at Sevagram, although both of them were at that time in Bombay. On being asked afterwards, why he had put his visitor to the trouble of travelling all the way to Sevagram, he replied: "The language I wanted to speak to him would not have come to me while I was staying in Birla House at Bombay. What is more, he would not have been able to understand my language away from the environment of Sevagram." Naturally his ideas of planning differed from those of the *elite*.

There are two approaches to planning. There is planning for power and prestige and there is planning for peace and plenty. Centralised planning, sometimes also called national planning, comes under the first category. Gandhiji too had a philosophy of planning. But it was planning from below by the people of their own lives in the way *they* thought best; not execution of blue-prints of what others thought to be best for them. Under it, not the cities but the villages held the key-position.

Nationalism, like patriotism, is a much abused word. It has often in the past been used to advance sectional interests at the expense of the common man. Gandhiji refused to recognise the distinction between the indigenous and the foreign as such. It was a false distinction. In free India, he said, "all interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions" would "be scrupulously respected."¹⁴ On the other hand no interest that was in conflict with these would be regarded

as sacrosanct because it was labelled "Indian" or "national". As he put it at the Round Table Conference, "it will be . . . a battle between the haves and the have-nots."

Aldous Huxley in his *Science, Liberty and Peace* has referred to the revival "in an up-to-date, pseudo-scientific and this-worldly form" of the old Jewish and Christian apocalypticism, as a result of faith in the dogma of progress, that has affected contemporary political life: "A glorious destiny awaits mankind, a coming Golden Age, in which more ingenious gadgets . . . will somehow have created a race of better and brighter human beings." It is a highly significant fact, he adds, that "all modern dictators, whether of the Right or of the Left, talk incessantly about the golden Future," and justify anything and everything on the ground that they are "means to that glorious end. But the one thing we all know about the future is that we are completely ignorant of what is going to happen, and that what does in fact happen is often very different from what we anticipated. Consequently any faith based upon hypothetical occurrences a long time hence must always, in the very nature of things, be hopelessly unrealistic."¹⁵ Today after decades of most elaborate planning that the present age has seen, we find still Nikita Khrushchev of U.S.S.R. declaring in the Supreme Soviet that it would be another five or seven years before the Russian industry would be able to "fully satisfy . . . footwear and fabric requirements" of the country, and ten or twelve years before there would be an end to Russia's acute housing shortage.¹⁶

"In practice," observes Aldous Huxley, "faith in the bigger and better future is one of the most potent enemies to present liberty."¹⁷ Gandhiji had an innate distrust of plans that related mainly to the future. He always weighed promises of "jam tomorrow" in the scale of "bread and butter today". There is an ever present danger of grandiose planning from above becoming an excuse for the continuation of class privileges. Widening the circle of privilege by admitting fresh partners into the charmed circle is not the way to abolish privilege. The haves must be prepared not only to share what they have with the have-nots but also to share with the latter their handicaps so long as they remain unremoved and to forego what all cannot have. Then there would be no easy-going self-complacency that regards the denial of elementary amenities to large sections of the people at the base of the pyramid as something that would take care of itself in God's good time but which cannot be allowed to hold up the march of "progress". Planning, Gandhiji insisted, must grow out of the people's felt needs and begin with the neglected primary needs of the poorest. Till these were satisfied, everything else must wait. When the people had gained more experience and their means had increased, it would be open to them to add more ambitious items if they so wished. Such planning automatically adjusts itself to the means of the people and pays its

way to prosperity as it develops. The people know at every step what they are about or in for. There are no big hazards, no incalculable risks to upset all anticipations. It helps build, too, in the process of economic reconstruction the character of the people on which alone the foundations of true national prosperity can rest. Participation in the effort for self-amelioration is directly converted into health and vigour and intelligence. Its glow is felt even by the weakest, instead of the weakest being sacrificed to the notion of "progress". Progress does not spell an endless succession of hardships and sacrifices to the poorest in the immediate present to be balanced by the joys of an earthy paradise in the promised Utopia which may or may not arrive, while the ruling class and its ever-growing hierarchy of henchmen continue securely to enjoy the fruits of progress.

Gandhiji set forth the picture of his plan as follows:

An ideal Indian village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation. It will have cottages with sufficient light and ventilation built of material obtainable within a radius of five miles of it. The cottages will have courtyards enabling householders to plant vegetables for domestic use and to house their cattle. The village lanes and streets will be free of all avoidable dust. It will have wells according to its needs and accessible to all. It will have houses of worship for all, also a common meeting place, a village common for grazing its cattle, a cooperative dairy, primary and secondary schools in which industrial education will be the central fact, and it will have Panchayats for settling disputes. It will produce its own grains, vegetables and fruit, and its own Khadi. This is roughly my idea of a model village. . . . Given . . . cooperation among the people, *almost the whole of the programme other than model cottages can be worked out at an expenditure within the means of the villagers . . . without Government assistance.* With the assistance there is no limit to the possibility of village reconstruction. . . . My task just now is to discover what the villagers can do to help themselves if they have mutual cooperation and contribute voluntary labour for the common good. *I am convinced that they can under intelligent guidance, double the village income as distinguished from individual income. There are in our villages inexhaustible resources not for commercial purposes in every case but certainly for local purposes in almost every case.* The greatest tragedy is the hopeless unwillingness of the villagers to better their lot.¹⁸ (Italics mine)

This calls for a different approach to planning, a different kind of outlook and preparation on the part of the servants of the nation. "We must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water

from the pool in which the villagers bathe, and wash their clothes and pots, and in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses and they will, as surely as I am writing this, respond to every call.”¹⁹

“Hitherto the villagers have died in their thousands,” Gandhiji told the *elite*, “so that we might live. Now we might have to die so that they may live. . . . The former have died unknowingly and involuntarily. Their enforced sacrifice has degraded us. If now we die knowingly and willingly, our sacrifice will ennoble us and the whole nation.”²⁰ “The golden rule to apply in all such cases is resolutely to refuse to have what millions cannot.”²¹ “We should be ashamed of resting or having a square meal so long as there is one able-bodied man or woman without work or food.”²²

This ability would not descend upon them all of a sudden, he warned. “The first thing is to cultivate the mental attitude that will not have possessions or facilities denied to millions, and the next immediate thing is to rearrange our lives as fast as possible in accordance with that mentality.”²³

They might find this trying at first. “The village work frightens us. We who are town-bred find it trying to take to the village life. Our bodies in many cases do not respond to the hard life.”²⁴ But this was a difficulty that had to be faced “boldly, even heroically” if their desire really was to establish Swaraj for the masses, not substitute one class rule for another. “The only way is to sit down in their midst and work away in steadfast faith, as their scavengers, their nurses, their servants, not as their patrons, and to forget . . . the ‘haves’. . . . Let us tackle the humbler work of the village.”²⁵

This did not make for power as that term is commonly understood, but it promised to remove hunger, ignorance and want from the land in the quickest time and ensure individual freedom, health and abundance for all. It required the leaders and the civil servants to live down to the level of the people and think and plan in terms of the latter’s every-day experience. First things would come first. Ambitious vistas of national glory and power would wait. This prospect did not enthuse them.

While the fight against the British was on, the Congress leaders were interested in developing the non-violent sanction. After coming to power they lost interest in it. They had now the more handy machinery of the State at their command. The non-violent power of the masses can prove a double-edged weapon if the rulers are not very careful as to the path they choose to tread. The Congress leaders after they became Government fought shy of it and of constructive work as conceived by Gandhiji, except in so far as it had a mass appeal and value at the hustings. The people smelt the change and became restive.

Complained one embittered correspondent: "India has reached the present state on the strength of Gandhiji's ideals and practice based on them. But is it not clear that we are kicking the very ladder by which we have mounted so high? Where are Hindu-Muslim unity, Hindustani, Khadi, village industries? Is not any talk about them hypocrisy?" Had not the Congress leaders virtually buried Gandhiji alive? he asked.

Writing under the caption "Is He Buried Alive?" Gandhiji replied in *Harijan*: "I cling to the hope that I am not yet buried alive. The hope rests on the belief that the masses have not lost faith in them (his ideals). When it is proved that they have, they will be lost and I can then be said to have been buried alive. *But so long as my faith burns bright, as I hope it will even if I stand alone, I shall be alive in the grave and what is more, speaking from it.*"²⁶ (Italics mine).

In the past when they had practically no resources, Congressmen had shown an amazing capacity for improvisation. They had successfully tackled havoc caused by famine, flood and earthquake, and erected at their annual sessions, overnight as it were, cities of bamboo, straw and canvas. Now they had the entire machinery of the Union Government at their disposal but in the face of the refugee problem they felt helpless. Surrounded by red-tape, cut off from the power of the people, they met, deliberated and planned endlessly, lost in the cavernous mazes of the cumbersome machine which they had inherited, while thousands upon thousands of refugees, herded together in camps, and hating to live on charity, asked only for facilities to settle down. "Give us tools and we shall do the job," they clamoured, but got none.²⁷

"The public is showing a critical tendency towards the Congress," observed Gandhiji in *Harijan*. "There must be some good reason for their doing so, and this change in their attitude should not be ignored. The Congress, which is in power, is not able, owing to defects in the present procedure, to give to the public what as a matter of fact is really available in the country and the public is displeased and interested parties are taking advantage of this situation to make the Congress unpopular. It is only the Congress which can maintain peace in the country and if it once loses its hold over the public, which may happen if the situation does not show signs of improvement and is allowed to deteriorate from day to day as it is doing, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for it to avoid the storm that may come."²⁸

The Congress on its part was passing through the pangs of slow death as a national organisation and its rebirth as a party machine. "Between two worlds one dead, the other powerless to be born" the masses suffered and their sufferings grew. Giving expression to the feeling of frustration in the people's mind on the first Independence Day celebration after independence, viz. 26th January, 1948, Gandhiji in

the course of a written address observed: "What are we celebrating today? Surely not our disillusionment. We are entitled to celebrate the hope that the worst is over and that we are on the road to showing the lowliest of the villager that it means his freedom from serfdom and that he is no longer a serf born to serve the cities and towns of India but that he is destined to exploit the city-dwellers for the advertisement of the finished fruits of well-thought out labours, that he is the salt of the Indian earth, that it means also equality of all classes and creeds, never the domination and superiority of the major community over a minor, however insignificant it may be in number or influence. Let us not defer the hope and make the heart sick."²⁹

The last days of Gandhiji were occupied with forging weapons that would enable him to cope with this growing welter of confusion. His plan of action was, it seems, in three parts: The first part related to the popular front, the other to the political front, and the third to the fundamental aspect of non-violence. The non-violence of the weak can work to a certain extent in the hands of the weak. It had so worked in the case of India. But when it becomes "a cloak for our weakness, it emasculates us."³⁰ Of late he had begun to say that the non-violence of the weak is a misnomer, i.e. "no non-violence at all". It had to be converted into non-violence of the brave, that is to say, true non-violence. The first part of his plan accordingly resolved itself into an effort to reorganise the constructive workers and constructive work organisations on a new basis in order to create a non-violent sanction that would enable the Congress effectively to complete the social revolution for which the political independence of India had cleared the way. The second took the form of giving a new orientation to Congress activities and devising for the Congress a new constitution that would enable it to retain its character as the people's organisation and to guide the politics of the country instead of being reduced to the status of a mere party machine in the hands of the ruling group. The third consisted in creating an incentive for the cultivation of the non-violence of the brave as a pre-condition of setting democracy on the march. The battle for decontrol became the vehicle for this last.

2

Controls were a vicious legacy of the war. Ever since March, 1947, when he returned to Delhi for the first time after leaving for Noakhali in October, 1946, Gandhiji had been off and on pleading with the Congress leaders in the Government for the abolition of controls. Controls were perhaps necessary during the war because the British Government

needed to divert large quantities of food-stuffs and other essential supplies, which could be ill spared from the country's requirements, to meet the needs of war. This unnatural diversion, coupled with interference with the country's economy, to stimulate production of strategic supplies, had created an artificial scarcity in respect of essential requirements. War-time inflation and extravagance accentuated the crisis. Prices spiralled up and rationing became inevitable in spite of its many and obvious drawbacks.

But as experience has everywhere shown, such controls once they come remain to stay, and so they continued even after the war. In the year 1947-48, the monsoon had not failed and there was no *real* scarcity of food. But owing to artificial control of prices, the growers and distributors of food-stuffs refused to part with their stocks at prices lower than what they could obtain in the open market.

The production figures registered a decline. The statisticians poring over the columns of dwindling figures felt uneasy in their easy-chairs and gave the red signal. The authorities reduced the ration of cereals from 16 oz. to 12 oz. Panic accentuated hoarding. The production figures sank still lower and this was taken as an argument for further cut in the ration. The vicious circle was set going. Artificial scarcity was well on the way to become a real scarcity. The growers produced less, stocks went into hiding, "ghost" ration cards multiplied, the black market flourished, and the machinery of control instead of providing a check itself became a gigantic racket. Standards of public morality declined, falsehood, fraud, petty oppression and graft became a national problem. Even the poor housewife could not escape the demoralising impact of corrupt practices to which she had hitherto been a stranger.

"The method of rationing of food and clothing is highly injurious for the country," Gandhiji wrote in *Harijan*. "... It is my firm belief that even today there is enough food-stuff in the country. Only the villagers have felt compelled to conceal the cereals and pulses under the insufferable control."³¹

To meet the cry for cheap bread, particularly for the non-producing industrial population and town-dwellers and the requirements of "deficit areas", the authorities had set up internally a procurement system by which they could draw food supplies from areas where there might be a surplus at the time. The gap was to be filled up by importing food from abroad and by squeezing the supplies from the unrationed areas. Gandhiji would have rather that deficit areas appeared deficit and the gap were covered by a nation-wide austerity campaign than that they should lull themselves into an easy-going self-complacency by converting the whole country artificially into a deficit area and covering up the dismal fact by begging food from abroad. But for the accumulated war-time surplus of sterling balances, which was being depleted on the average annually to the tune of rupees one hundred

crores to a hundred and twenty-five crores between years 1947-50 on the import of food alone, this policy might have spelt a complete collapse of the country's economy at home and financial credit abroad.

In the place of controls, Government could have run their own stores for selling at regulation price food grains which they could have bought in the open market, or in the last extremity, from an outside source. This was later suggested to the President of the Indian Republic by the American Ambassador in India, Chester Bowles, who had himself been in charge of the price control administration in the United States during the early days of the Second World War. It would have broken the vicious circle and brought about automatic regulation of prices. This, however, was not done.

The problem of cloth was even simpler. The hoarder, the black-marketer, or the profiteer would have no chance to fleece the public, Gandhiji pleaded, if the Government utilised the full potential of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. It had demonstrated its efficacy during the fight against the British. Foreign rulers had regarded Khadi with hostility. One could understand that. But the popular Government could have no such reason. To his utter amazement, however, he found that since they had come into power "nobody talked of Khadi; nobody seemed to have his faith in the possibility of Khadi. They could think of nothing but mill cloth for clothing India."³²

Democracy was fast becoming a costly affair. It meant more Ministers, more popular representatives, more jobs, more appointments, more paraphernalia of the "prestige" of independence. In other words, it meant more and still more expenditure. The cost of administration mounted up. The cost of defence too was going up with the prospect of a race of armaments between India and Pakistan as a result of the division of the armed forces. The planners of the nation's destiny had their eyes on more revenue, additional sources of taxation. Big industry and big business alone could provide that and help build up an adequate military potential to make India a "great and powerful nation", modern and up-to-date—not the poor handicraftsman working in his cottage.

"I have repeatedly said," Gandhiji wrote in *Harijan*, casting aside his habitual reserve on the subject, "that I have neither part nor say in many things that are going on in the country today. It is no secret that Congress willingly said good-bye to non-violence when it accepted power. . . . The plain fact of the matter is that I am not the current coin that, I had fancied, I once was. Mine is a voice in the wilderness. . . . Khadi . . . has a kind of place if we tear it from its root which is Ahimsa. It no longer occupies the proud place of being the symbol *par excellence* of Ahimsa. Those who being in the political field support Khadi do so because it has attained that vogue. Today three cheers belong not to Khadi but to mill cloth. . . . Somehow or other the fear

has seized us that the millions will not take to hand-spinning and weaving hand-spun yarn for their own needs. A haunted man will detect fear even where there is no cause for it. And do we not know that many more die of fright than of the actual disease, the very name of which has given them the fright?"³³

The concluding portion of Gandhiji's speech in the All-India Congress Committee, in November, 1947, referred to the question of controls. "Control . . . is responsible for much of the corruption that is rampant today. . . . If you do not abolish controls immediately, you will one day regret it. It makes people lazy and helpless."

The All-India Congress Committee, in a resolution, expressed alarm at the disturbance of normal life by the various controls, especially in regard to food-stuffs and clothing, and asked the Central and Provincial Governments to give urgent consideration to the problem of decontrol.

In the first week of November, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Minister for Food and Agriculture, called a meeting of the Provincial Premiers and their representatives to advise him on the question of food control. "Our Ministers are of the people, from the people," remarked Gandhiji in the course of a prayer address on the eve of the meeting. "Let them not arrogate to themselves greater knowledge than those experienced men who do not happen to occupy ministerial chairs—but who hold the view strongly that the sooner the control is removed the better. . . . Democracy will break under the strain of apron strings. It can exist only on trust. If the people die because they will not labour or because they will defraud one another, it will be a welcome deliverance. The rest will then learn not to repeat the sin of being lazy, idle or cruelly selfish."³⁴

The Government were trying to spoon-feed the people, he warned. What the people needed was to be thrown on their own resources. "Experts of a sort," the Civil Service were "used to carrying on work from their offices. The red-tape and the files controlled their activity. They had never come in contact with the peasants. They did not know them."³⁵ They had to keep the foreign rule going somehow. And they were too few to handle successfully the work of reviving the drooping spirits of the millions.

How I wish that the popular Ministers were humble enough to recognise the change that has come over the people. Their (the people's) initiative should not be strangled by the controls. They should be allowed to be self-reliant. Democracy should not result in making them helpless.³⁶

Control gives rise to fraud, suppression of truth, intensification of the black market and to artificial scarcity. Above all, it unmans the people and deprives them of initiative, it undoes the teaching

of self-help they have been learning for a generation. . . . This is a tragedy next only, if indeed not equal, to the fratricide . . . and the insane exchange of population resulting in . . . death, starvation and want of proper residence and clothing for the coming inclement weather. The second is certainly more spectacular. We dare not forget the first because it is not spectacular.³⁷

Supposing the worst came to the worst, he pleaded, and the removal of controls made the situation worse, there was nothing to prevent them from reviving the controls. Personally, however, he had not a shadow of doubt that it would "greatly ease" the situation. And what was more, "people would begin to exert themselves to solve the problems and have little time to quarrel among themselves."³⁸

The Union Ministers had fallen into the habit of relying on the advice tendered by their experts instead of listening to lay advice of those who were not in the administration. Gandhiji warned them: the figures put before them by their officers were not gospel truth. They were neither accurate nor full. Besides statistics could lie.

Must the voice of the people be drowned by the noise of the pundits, who claim to know all about the virtue of controls? Would that our Ministers who are drawn from the people and are of the people listened to the voice of the people rather than of the controllers of the red-tape, which they know did them infinite harm when they were in the wilderness! The pundits then ruled with a vengeance. Must they do even now?³⁹

He asked the popular Ministers to get out of the jungle of statistics and files, and woo the public to help themselves with the greatest advantage to themselves and to the country.

Here was the challenge of a grave evil, which impinged on the life of every individual and threatened to rob independence of its content for which millions had fought, suffered and sacrificed. Had their non-violence of the last thirty years not been the non-violence of the weak, he told the people, they would not have experienced the helplessness that they were doing. They would have by non-violent organisation, easily put an end to black marketing, hoarding, profiteering, corruption, and so on.

The battle of decontrol became the second starting point of Gandhiji's endeavour to bring back the people to the non-violence of the brave and the Government to the non-violence of the people. If by dint of non-violent organisation they could get rid of the incubus that was weighing upon them, it might provide an all-powerful urge for the cultivation of that inner discipline, which is the core of the non-violence of the brave but for which he had not been able to devise a programme attractive enough (see Vol. II, page 327).

3

Following upon the recommendations of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Committee, sugar was decontrolled early in December, 1947. The result was spectacular. The price of sugar came down immediately. The price of towels etc. also declined in sympathy, though the control on cloth had not yet been removed.

A few days after, the authorities decided to proceed with progressive decontrol of food grains. Referring to it Gandhiji explained that the object of decontrol was *not to lower price at a bound but to return to normal life*. "Decontrol means that the business of foresight is transferred from the few members of the Government to the millions comprising the nation."⁴⁰ The Government would have to bring home to the people methods of growing more food and to that end the agricultural department would have to learn how to serve "the hitherto neglected small grower as against the big capitalist producer."

He began to fill the columns of *Harijan* with instructions for turning "matter out of place" into compost and for growing vegetables in their backyards and kitchen gardens. Under his inspiration and guidance Mirabeau set about organising an all-India Compost Conference. As a result of its labours a compost department under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture was set up to give impetus to compost making and to educate the people in the same.

Price fixing under the procurement policy of the British Government had been manipulated to regulate the food prices in the interest of organised industry and the non-producing urban-population mainly. The farmer had been the sufferer. The small grower raised his crops largely for his own use. He reserved a small percentage for the general consumer. Control meant less payment to him for his surplus. It was therefore but to be expected that under decontrol he would demand and get a higher price for his produce. This would inevitably cause a rise in the prices of food. This, said Gandhiji, the consumer must not grudge. It was the duty of the Government to make this clear to the public from day to day and from week to week, and to see that in the new set up the whole of the percentage in the rise of prices went to the grower. The wealthy factory owners and middlemen should work in close cooperation with and in subordination to the Government. "There should be perfect coordination among those few men or corporations who have hitherto exploited the poor for their selfish purpose and have not hesitated to enter into unhealthy rivalry among themselves. This has to go specially in the case of food and cloth, where the profit motive has to be wholly absent."⁴¹

He next turned his attention to the decontrol of cloth and fire-

wood. Again the experts jibbed. Gandhiji argued with them: The people would not consume more firewood than necessary if the control was lifted. Removal of the control would not, therefore, adversely affect the poor in regard to firewood. About cloth, he had no fear whatever, unless Khadi which had been acclaimed as the "livery of our freedom" had completely gone into oblivion.

We have cotton enough and capable hands enough to ply the Charkha and the loom in our villages. We can clothe ourselves comfortably and without fuss and without heavy transport facilities. Our railways in the dead regime were first a military necessity, then for transporting cotton bales to the ports of export and distribution of calico manufactures imported from foreign parts. All this centralisation becomes a superfluity when our hand-spun calico called Khadi is manufactured and mostly used in our villages. Let us not swear at our villagers to conceal our laziness or ignorance or both.⁴²

Remained the petrol. Shortage of railway transport, he instinctively sensed, constituted the real bottle-neck. There was shortage of coal and wagons. Motor transport was the obvious answer. But control on petrol coupled with the monopoly system in licensing plying vehicles hampered road transport. A regular traffic in petrol permits had grown up under it. Simply by selling his petrol permits for one vehicle, the owner holding a licence for a single route could easily net ten thousand rupees a month. If there were no petrol rationing and no monopoly system, the income from plying one vehicle could not exceed three hundred rupees per month.

The upholders of petrol rationing objected: India's quota of petrol supply was poor; only one per cent. of the world's supply. Rationing of petrol was, therefore, necessary. "If our quota of petrol is poor," Gandhiji asked them, "how is it that the black market supply (of petrol) is inexhaustible and . . . unnecessary traffic goes on without hindrance?"⁴³ Petrol was not a thing which everybody needed. The Government could keep enough for their requirement. They could even buy in the "open black market".⁴⁴

Quick road transport, he predicted, would immediately bring down the prices of articles of common consumption. There was for instance the poor man's salt. The salt tax had gone but the system of selective licensing had remained and salt had become even more expensive than before. The reason was partly transport difficulty and partly the selfish greed of a few contractors. There was a single remedy for both. Now that salt was free, people should shed their "laziness" and make their own salt, wherever it was possible as they had done during the Salt Satyagraha days. It opened up the glorious vista of galvanising

millions into a united constructive non-violent effort related to one of their basic needs.

Once again the instinct of the man of the masses proved a surer guide than the wisdom of experts. By the first week of January, 1948, the prices of sugar and allied products in the open market had dropped by 50 per cent.⁴⁵ The prices of woollen and silken cloth also had fallen by 50 per cent.; stocks came out of their hiding and the market was flooded with silks and woollens. Wholesale prices of cotton cloth and yarn began to slump in anticipation of decontrol. The fears of the statisticians were belied. They had failed to take into account the human factor. Gandhiji presented to them the moral: "*Timidity has no place in democracy. When people in general believe in and want a particular thing, their representatives have but to give shape to their demand and make it feasible. A favourable manly attitude of the multitude has been found to go a long way in winning battles.*"⁴⁶

The battle of decontrol provided a striking demonstration of the native vigour of Gandhiji's method of direct approach to the people's problems and his technique of invoking their capacity for improvisation to solve them.

Telegrams and letters of congratulations began pouring in. Gandhiji declined to take credit for the achievement. The real credit belonged to the masses, he said. Businessmen had realised that he was merely voicing the opinion of the millions when he said that the controls should go. He was sure that if his voice had prevailed, "the unseemly communal trouble", too, would have long become a thing of the past. But in that regard he was dubbed a "visionary". He knew he was right there also. Could he be "consistently right and practical in so many things, including decontrol and impractical in this matter of life and death for the nation?" he asked.⁴⁷

Gandhiji once defined democracy as "the art and science of mobilising the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all."⁴⁸ What he was trying to do was to set democracy on the march. The campaign for decontrol marked the beginning of that effort. It called for faith in human nature and in the possibilities latent in the common man. It would be a negation of democracy, he said, if the Government did everything and the people did nothing, or if the Government prevented them from doing anything they wanted to do. A Government worth the name had to show to the nation "how to face the handicaps of life through its own collective effort instead of its being effortlessly helped to live anyhow."⁴⁹

"The bogy of the shooting up of prices does not frighten me," he wrote in *Harijan*. "If we have many sharks and we do not know how to combat them, we shall deserve to be eaten up by them. Then we shall know how to carry ourselves in the teeth of adversity. Real demo-

cracy people learn not from books, nor from the Government who are in name and in reality their servants. Hard experience is the most efficient teacher in democracy.”⁵⁰

On the 30th January, 1948, he crossed the bar. Government failed to take subsidiary steps such as open market operations, which could have made the experiment of decontrol a success. Profiteering came back, prices again spiralled up. The authorities had never fully appreciated the full implications of decontrol. At the first sign of panic, they hurriedly reversed the experiment. The rise in prices in the short period, as a result of decontrol, was but to be expected. It could only be temporary. Prices could be depended upon to return to their normal level after the initial difficulties of adjustment were overcome and the system had had a long enough trial to have some effect on production. But the Government would not wait even till the next *kharif* harvest to come in December next. Controls were clamped down again in October, 1948.

The authorities were frightened of the spectre of the hoarder and the profiteer. They could not shoot them all. No democratic Government can. Gandhiji reminded them of what they had forgotten, viz. that the people's non-violent organisation can step in and take over where governmental machinery stops short or fails. He had already begun to put moral pressure upon the industrialists and businessmen to curb their short-sighted greed.

Addressing a gathering of Delhi businessmen in the Hardinge Library Hall on 28th December, he told them that the reason for the controls was the fear of dishonesty and profiteering. The businessmen wanted decontrol. He assumed it was not for profiteering but for the sake of the people. They were bound, therefore, to be cent per cent. honest. If the various associations of businessmen and millowners and the general public strengthened each others' hands for the removal of control, they would become the arm of the Government in a more real sense than the Civil Service. Real business did not consist in merely making money anyhow. Pointing to a placard in the hall which said that the prosperity of India lay in decontrol, he concluded that he could heartily endorse that motto because of his belief in the fundamental honesty of businessmen. He hoped they would not belie that faith.

His handling of businessmen was characteristic of his combination of naivete with astuteness, trust with circumspection. Many a party had before fallen for his cooperation when it seemed to suit their self-interest. But they found that it stuck in their throat when they tried to get away with it. The businessmen knew that if after securing their object they failed to keep their part of the bargain, he would not hesitate to invoke against them the sanction of Satyagraha. This could include peaceful picketing and boycott. He was sure, all sections

of the public would whole-heartedly respond. And since in the present case the non-violent action of the people would not be the result of a feeling of helplessness, as it partly was during the fight against the British, it would not be of the "passive resistance" variety but the non-violence of the brave.

4

Gandhiji was a born democrat. He was the greatest democrat of all times because he saw God in humanity and humanity in God. The one saved him from the dilemma which sometimes confronts humanists when Demos turns into Chaos; the other saved him from the fallacy of individualism which leads men to seek peace and personal salvation in the retirement of the cave.

There are two approaches to democracy. One involves the elimination of the weakest for "the good of the greatest number", as is done in the Western democracies today. This is the violent approach. The other is the non-violent approach based on the principle of "unto this last". Gandhiji described Western democracy as it functions today, as "diluted Nazism or Fascism. At best . . . merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism."⁵¹ Under it "the weakest . . . go to the wall." Gandhiji regarded this as an insult to man and God, a travesty of true democracy. "No country in the world today shows any but patronising regard for the weak My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest."⁵² "The rule of the people by the people for the people" means the rule of "unadulterated Ahimsa" for the simple reason that the natural corollary to the use of violent means would be "to remove all opposition through the suppression and extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom."⁵³

The independence he envisaged was an independence in which freedom and fruits of freedom would be enjoyed by the lowliest in an equal measure with the tallest. For this the means for its attainment had to be such that the weakest could take an equal share in the winning of it with the strongest. This is possible only under non-violence.

It was because India was trying to evolve true democracy, explained Gandhiji to an American friend, that she had adopted "Satyagraha expressed through Charkha, the village industries . . . prohibition and non-violent organisation of labour etc." as her weapons. "These mean mass effort and mass education." He called it "the permanent part of the non-violent effort. From this effort is created the capacity to offer non-violent resistance called non-cooperation and civil disobedience."⁵⁴

To knit together in a common bond of fellowship the millions and

weave the pattern of non-violence into the basic activities of their lives, Gandhiji had devised his eighteen-fold constructive programme—a programme of humanitarian service of the common man—and set up a number of organisations to work it out. Such activity, when consciously practised, provides a basis for non-violent organisation and discipline to the people, resting not upon force but its opposite. He gave it the name “constructive non-violence”.

There is nothing rigid or inviolable in the form of the various constructive activities. They can be changed, added to, or subtracted from at will and replaced by other equivalent forms according to the varying needs, temperaments and traditions and the social, economic and religious background of the people concerned.⁵⁵ The only thing that is essential is that they should be “fundamentally non-violent” and provide an answer to some keenly felt need or recognised evil of the time. They must be elemental in their simplicity and universal in their scope so as to embrace the largest number of people in their fold — particularly the masses.

“Constructive work,” in the words of Gandhiji, “is for a non-violent army what drilling etc. is for an army designed for bloody warfare.”⁵⁶ Experience showed, he said, that for the attainment of limited or local objectives, it was possible for individuals or small groups to launch successful non-violent action even without this preparation. But for its successful application in vital issues involving large masses of people, training in constructive work was an absolute necessity. “Trust begotten in the pursuit of continuous constructive work becomes a tremendous asset at the critical moment. . . . Individual civil disobedience among an unprepared people and by leaders not known to or trusted by them is of no avail; and mass civil disobedience is an impossibility.”⁵⁷

Ever since their inception, the various constructive work organisations had sought consistently to cooperate with the Congress. The Congress, on its part, had welcomed their cooperation chiefly for its political value in the fight against the British. Had they any role to play after the attainment of independence? Gandhiji had not a shadow of a doubt, as he had so often reiterated, that constructive work would be as necessary for sustaining independence as it had been for attaining it. While the non-violent struggle was on, he had written a small brochure on the theory and practice of constructive programme as an instrument for the attainment of freedom. After independence, when his publishers wanted to bring out a new edition of it, he told them that for a new edition it would have to be recast, perhaps rewritten, and its argument recast to show how constructive programme could be used to realise the full content of independence in terms of the masses. But before he could do so he was carried away.

The Indian National Congress had for its goal the winning of

India's independence. That object had been achieved. To redefine its objective in the altered circumstances, and to draw up an economic programme for the Congress under independence, the All-India Congress Committee, in its meeting in November, 1947, had appointed an Objectives and Economic Programme Committee.

Some members of the Objectives and Economic Programme Committee, with the representatives of the various constructive work organisations, had a series of talks with Gandhiji in the first half of December, 1947. The gathering included seasoned soldiers of many a non-violent struggle. Some of them had been with Gandhiji from the very beginning of his political career in India. This was the last meeting that he was to have with them.

Hitherto non-violence had been used to offer resistance to the alien Government. The problem now was how to run the Government non-violently. Non-violence could have no future as world power unless it could be shown to be capable of retaining and defending the independence which it had helped India to win; in other words, unless it could successfully act upon and influence power politics. The question was whether it could be so used, and if so how?

There was a strong feeling among an important section of constructive workers that while the Congress had sworn adherence to constructive programme and a decentralised system of rural economy based on handicrafts and cottage industries for years when it was engaged in the struggle for freedom, since coming into power it showed signs of giving it the go-bye. What use was their striving to popularise the use of village products like brown sugar, hand-pounded rice etc., they asked, when their Government was sanctioning the erection of sugar and rice mills and was giving protection to sugar industry? Congress leaders continued to talk of expanding Khadi production but the Provincial Governments were increasing cloth mills (see Vol. II, p. 25). Now that they had their own Government, was not the right course for those who had faith in constructive programme to form themselves into a separate organisation, get into the Government and use it for the furtherance of their goal, viz. the building up of a non-violent social order? They would thus accomplish in five years what as a non-official, reformist group outside the Government they would not be able to achieve in fifty.

Gandhiji differed. The moment non-violence assumed power, it contradicted itself and became contaminated. In 1937, he had sent some members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, an organisation of out and out believers in non-violence, into the legislatures to purify politics, to purge it of violence and corruption. "The Sangh made a short-lived attempt under my guidance to enter into and purify the politics of the country, but I had to admit defeat and ultimately the Sangh itself had to be wound up." Their purpose, he told the workers, would be served

if they set their own house in order and attained the standard that was expected of them. They would then guide power and mould the politics of the country without taking power themselves.

Why did they lack the power to make the Government go the whole-hog with them? The fault lay with the constructive workers. They had faith in constructive work but their faith was not deep or enlightened enough to illumine their intellect and so their growth had been lop-sided. "The criticism levelled against constructive workers is that they are wooden-minded, lacking in imagination and intellect. Reason, as a rule, follows sentiment. Our intelligentsia are not lacking in sympathy for constructive work. But we have not sufficiently penetrated their hearts to carry their reason with us. Such is our bankruptcy."

He then went on to give his analysis of the reasons for the failure. The Congress had adopted constructive work for its political value. "The fight over, our interest in constructive work waned. Constructive work is not a strategy or a technique of fighting to be adopted or discarded as expediency may suggest. It connotes a way of life. It has to be adopted by the heart as well as by the intellect." It was no use cavelling at the Congress. The Congress had lent the various constructive work organisations its name, it had given them the charter to function, but the constructive workers had failed to come up to the scratch. "*The goal of constructive work is not to provide economic relief to the unemployed or to distribute some wages to the poor but to build up a non-violent social order. In that we have not made much headway.*" What they needed for that was "*a superior, a more advanced type of worker who would have a full understanding of the scientific basis of constructive work and an awareness of its implications in terms of non-violence.* Success would depend on uttermost purity; impatience would be fatal."

For the time being, most of their workers were drawn from the cities. But thereafter, they would, he told them, need more and more "a cadre of workers drawn from the villages themselves who can get under the skin of the villagers and instinctively think in terms of their thought."

As preparatory to the discharge of their new role, he suggested that there should be integration of the various constructive work organisations and co-ordination of their activities. If the various organisations could unite and work together without a jar or jolt under jointly chosen representatives, it would be a big step forward. On the other hand, if they could not express non-violence in their mutual relationships and work harmoniously among themselves, they would not be able to produce any effect on their environment.

The various associations had hitherto functioned separately and independently of one another. Their coming together would ensure economy of organisation. For instance, why should there be separate

stores and sales depots for the Spinners' Association and the Village Industries Association? Why could not the machinery of the Spinners' Association be available for furthering the activities of both? Then there was the question of the education of the constructive workers' children. Why should not the Talimi Sangh take it up? Was not that the function of the Talimi Sangh? "If we will not cooperate even in such matters, it will show that we have not understood how truth and Ahimsa work."

He put the burden of the transformation upon the shoulders of the Talimi Sangh. Its was essentially the universal educator's role. As he saw it, the whole problem facing the country resolved itself into one of "adult education". There was the challenge of communalism which threatened the very basis of what they had stood for and fought for all these years, i.e. the ideal of the secular State. "To correct the wrong psychology of the people in this regard is essentially a problem in adult education and therefore the function of the Talimi Sangh." It was for the Talimi Sangh to qualify itself for that role. As a first step in that direction, he suggested that each and every member of the Sangh should achieve utmost self-purification. A letter he wrote to a prominent member of the Talimi Sangh a few days later will serve as an illustration: "Years ago X told me that you were not wholly truthful. . . . He also said that you were not free from arrogance. Where there is arrogance, there can be no Ahimsa. . . . If what I have been told is true, the great work you are shouldering will not flourish, or else it will belie its name. Do not take it too much to heart. If there is truth in it, make a candid admission and turn the occasion into a stepping stone for progress." Characteristically the letter concluded: "I have described the present phase of our national effort as a vast all-embracing experiment in adult education which embraces us all—including myself. For am I not the chief protagonist and progenitor of the whole idea of basic education?"

In course of discussion Dr. Zakir Husain remarked: "If an overall organisation of the various associations comes into being, it will not be possible for it to keep out of power politics."

Gandhiji: "I do not want the united constructive workers' organisation in any sense to develop into a rival to the Congress or to the Government. If the united constructive workers' organisation tries to go into power politics, it will be its ruin. . . . By abjuring power and devoting ourselves to pure, selfless service of the voters, we can guide and influence them. It will give us far more real power than we shall have by going into the Government. A stage may come when the people themselves may say that they want us and no-one else in power. The question can then be considered. I shall most probably be not alive then. But when that time comes, the organisation will throw up from amongst its own ranks someone who will take over the

reins of administration. *By that time India shall have become an ideal State.*"

Dr. Zakir Husain: "Shall we not need ideal men in order to inaugurate the ideal State?"

Gandhiji: "We can send men of our choice without going into the Government ourselves. Today everybody in the Congress is running after power. Let us not be in the same cry as the power-seekers . . . but keep altogether aloof from power politics and its contagion. The objective of the constructive work organisations is to generate political power, not to capture it. But if we say that political power being attained, it should be ours as a reward for our labour, it would degrade us.

"Take the Spinners' Association. It has the largest membership of all the constructive work organisations. Yet I have never tried to get its members enrolled on the Congress register. It was suggested to me once but I opposed it. Do we want to capture the Congress? I asked. That would be tantamount to committing suicide. The Congress can be ours only by right of service. What actually happened was that at the time of the general elections, the people from the villages came and sought our advice as to whom they should vote for, because they knew that we were there as their true servants and had no axe to grind. Today we have our own Government. Under adult suffrage, if we are worth our salt, we should have such hold upon the people that whoever was chosen by us should be returned. Politics have today become corrupt. Anybody who goes into them is contaminated. Let us keep out of them altogether. Our influence will grow thereby. The greater our inner purity, the greater shall be our hold on the people, without any effort on our part.

"You have met here as the constructive wing of the Congress. If you have assimilated what I have told you, it should give you the strength to remove corruption everywhere. For that you do not need to go into any position of power in the Congress organisation. Your work is among the masses. You have to resuscitate the village, make it prosperous, give it more education, more power."

The workers put forth their difficulty. The Constituent Assembly was hammering out a constitution for the Indian Union. Congressmen had always said that the village Panchayat must be the foundation of their future polity. But in the constitution that was being framed, there was no mention of village Panchayats. What good would it be if the village did not find its due place in it? Should constructive workers allow this to happen?

Gandhiji: "I am well aware of it. We must recognise the fact that the constitution we want or the social order of our dreams cannot come through the Congress of today. Nor need that worry you. Nobody knows what shape the constitution will ultimately take. Therefore, I say, leave constitution-making to those who are labouring at

it. Do not bother about effecting changes in it. It should be enough for us if the constitution we get does not actually stand in the way of constructive work. Constitution-making in any case would be over in a few months. What next? The responsibility for working it and making a success of it will rest on you. Supposing you get a constitution after your heart, but it does not work. After five years, someone will say, 'You had your innings, now give us a chance.' You will have to give in and they may try to seize power, set up a dictatorship and strangle the Congress. On the other hand, suppose you do not take power but obtain a hold on the people. You will then be able to return at the polls whomsoever you may wish. Forget membership of the Government therefore so long as the voters are in your hand. Take care of the root. Make purity the sole test. Even a handful imbued with this spirit will be able to transform the atmosphere. The people will soon perceive the difference and will not be slow to react. Yours is an uphill and difficult task. But it is full of rich promise."

Workers: "The people are with us, but the Government obstructs our effort. What are we to do?"

Gandhiji: "If the people are with you, the Government is bound to respond. If it does not, it will be set aside and another installed in its place."

Workers: "But why cannot we get the Congress to do it?"

Gandhiji: "Because the Congressmen are not sufficiently interested in constructive work. If they were, it should not have been necessary for us to meet here today."

Workers: "That being the Congress mentality, what is the use of giving place to constructive work organisations in the Congress constitution?"

Gandhiji: "Because the constitution moulds the psychology of the people. We may not after all be able to get Congressmen to do the things they profess to believe in. But it should be our duty to see that the case does not go by default owing to our neglect or laziness."

Workers: "Labour is represented in the Legislative Assemblies. There are special seats reserved for the universities. Why should not the constructive workers similarly have functional representatives in the All-India Congress Committee, who would *then of course* act in the general way too?"

Gandhiji: "No, not the mixture. Functional is all right but in the general there is so much corruption today that it frightens me. Everybody wants to carry so many votes in his pocket, because votes give power. Under adult suffrage anybody who is eligible has a vote. But to regard adult suffrage as a means for capturing political power would be to put the constitution to a corrupt use. My suggestion to you, therefore, is that the various constructive work organisations should form themselves into one body and the Working Committee and the

All-India Congress Committee should ask it to send its nominees to advise and guide them in matters of policy pertaining to constructive work. The Congress has lent us its name and prestige. In return, it derives strength and prestige from us by virtue of the service which we, as its true servants, render to the people. The relationship of the constructive work organisations with the Congress is purely moral. It can be severed at any moment. As specialists, it is for us to tender to the Congress advice on what needs to be done. There are the Ahmedabad Labour Union, the Spinners' Association, the Go-Seva Sangh, the Village Industries Association, the Talimi Sangh, the Chambers of Commerce and so on. The Congress claims to represent them all, although all of them are not organisationally related to it. Take all the living organisations with you. Purify yourselves of all dross, banish the very idea of capture of power and you will be able to guide power and keep it on the right path. Therein lies the salvation of the masses. There is no other way."

5

"Can love be organised?" a Chinese visitor once asked Gandhiji. "Organisation in the orthodox sense may not be possible," replied Gandhiji. "But there is no bar to united non-violent action. . . . It has its own technique."⁵⁸

Gandhiji had always said that "complete non-violence needs neither the aid of speech nor the pen. . . . It certainly does not stand in need of organised strength. A man or a woman who is saturated with Ahimsa has only to will a thing and it happens."⁵⁹

This led some people—and they included some of Gandhiji's closest associates—to ask whether organisation could have any place in non-violence; whether the two were not incompatible. They thought that they were. Gandhiji held otherwise. He regarded *organisation as the test* of true Ahimsa. While he could picture to himself what he had envisaged about complete non-violence, he said, his own experience of it was so meagre that he could not ask others to build upon it. Non-violence to him meant not merely a spiritual beatitude—a means for individual salvation—but an instrument of action which the people at large could use for the redress of social no less than individual wrongs. Organisation implies the capacity to back decisions by an effective sanction. Non-violence that could not forge an effective sanction to enforce the social will for the vindication of truth and justice, therefore, had very little value in his eyes. Hence his search for the secret of non-violent organisation.

The principles of non-violent organisation differ in several respects from those of organisation of violence. As Gandhiji put it: "The

way of organising the forces of good must be opposite to that of the evil way." What precisely it was, he said, he did not yet fully know. He was still experimenting when he was taken away. Some of these principles can, however, be studied *in vivo* in the character, constitution and working of Gandhiji's various constructive work organisations. They all presented some anomalous characteristics or paradoxes in common.

For instance, they all bore the imprimatur and sanction of the Congress but they functioned independently of the Congress. The Congress had no jurisdiction or control over them. This provided a solution to the ticklish problem of cooperation between groups and organisations holding different or dissimilar ideals, without compromising their respective ideals, that has always been the bugbear of idealists. The Congress was not a homogeneous organisation. It had adopted non-violence only as a policy which it was free to change at will. The constructive work organisations, on the other hand, were conceived by Gandhiji as the means for the generation of unadulterated non-violence. In the present case, so long as the Congress adhered to the policy of unadulterated non-violence, the activities of the various constructive work organisations would give it strength. But the constructive work organisations would remain unaffected by the heterogeneous character of the Congress, or by a change in Congress policy.

The second peculiarity of these organisations was that though they had all a definite political objective, their activities were strictly non-political. By scrupulously keeping politics out of their activities and concentrating solely on the means, viz. non-violent organisation of the people, they were able to achieve striking political results.

Finally, while these organisations were instruments for building democracy, they were not democracies in the sense that their executives were not elected by the popular vote or by the vote of the members. A reformer or a pioneer cannot afford to be democratic in the sense of following majority decisions. His function is to lead, to educate. "If you will be soldiers in my army," said Gandhiji to his workers, "understand that there is no room for democracy in that organisation. The army may be a part of a democratic organisation, but there can be no democracy in it, as there can be none in a bank, as there is none in our various organisations—All-India Spinners' Association, All-India Village Industries Association, and so on. In an army the General's word is law, and his conditions cannot be relaxed."⁶⁰

The Harijan Sevak Sangh presented still another paradox. Though founded with the object of the eradication of untouchability, root and branch, and the amelioration of Harijans, its executive was drawn solely from the ranks of the "caste" Hindus. Harijans had no place on it. This puzzled many people at the time. But Gandhiji was firm on this point. The function of the Harijan Sevak Sangh was not to claim

a privilege or confer a favour but to discharge a debt. He had conceived it as "a society of penitents". Since the sinners in the present case were "caste" Hindus, it was they who must show penitence by expiatory service of the Harijans and education of "caste" Hindu opinion to purge Hinduism of the taint of untouchability. Untouchability could not be eradicated unless the wrong-doers showed genuine repentance and repentance cannot be done by proxy.

The same paradoxical characteristics were reflected in their method of transacting business, too. Their decisions were not taken by majority vote, but by "the general associative principle of the large family system" as obtains in a Panchayat. The articles of association were binding upon all the organisations but the sole sanction behind their decisions was the moral authority of the leader.

Gandhiji combined in his person the roles of both a democrat and a reformer. Often the two alternated. When the democrat in him was called to the fore, he allowed himself to be led by majority decisions. When on the other hand, he had to play the role of a reformer or a pioneer, he functioned through his Ashram or through an *ad hoc* body like a Satyagraha Committee, where the majority rule did not apply. Sometimes the two roles overlapped. He then functioned purely in his individual capacity. Outstanding instances of this were when he declared a "one-man rebellion" against constituted authority for the vindication of the people's self-respect, or in obedience to his "inner voice" launched on a fast to protest against social or governmental injustice.

The Congress had a double function. It was a democratic organisation in peace time. It became a non-violent army in "war" time. In its second capacity it had no voting power. Its will was expressed by its General "whoever he may be". Every unit had to tender him willing obedience in thought, word, and deed. "Yes, even in thought, since the fight is non-violent."⁶¹

In a national emergency, when Gandhiji was called upon to lead the people in a Satyagraha fight, he got himself voted as a "dictator" with full powers; or as the nation's sole representative, when he was called upon to conduct delicate negotiations on the nation's behalf, as at the time of the second Indian Round Table Conference. But since his power as a "dictator" rested solely on his moral authority, his "dictatorship" was not incompatible with the purest democracy.

In the case of the constructive work organisations, the apparent contradiction between the form of their constitution and their objective was removed by Gandhiji's insistence that while they could have their own funds, the funds should be spent up in the implementation of their programmes and not hoarded to enable them to live upon an assured fixed income. This would force them to vindicate their existence by the service they rendered. If they failed to discharge their

trust properly or to win or retain public confidence, public support would dry up and they would have either to close down or to reform; they would never stagnate. This helped to preserve their truly democratic character in spite of their "undemocratic" constitution.

Some of these characteristics were seen in action in the course of the discussion on the integration of the various constructive work organisations. The heads of some of the organisations, it was well known, had some mental reservations in regard to integration. It was suggested by a co-worker, whose thinking obviously was in terms of power politics, that the question should first be referred to the rank and file of the various organisations. They would then place their decisions before the heads. A gathering of office-bearers would not have "the requisite atmosphere"; theirs would be a "narrow and subjective approach". Gandhiji smelt danger in this. It savoured of a manoeuvre to force the hands of the senior members by the majority vote of the rank and file. He at once put his foot down on it. "This is not how a non-violent democracy functions," he told them. "The average worker will not even understand. He will feel at sea in such a discussion. Let the props and pillars unite first. All will then feel the glow of strength."

Ultimately it was decided that the question of integration should be taken up in another meeting in an atmosphere of tranquillity, away from the political heat and turmoil of the capital, preferably at Sevagram.

Gandhiji to Kishorlal Mashruwala

29th, January 1948

I have mooted to the friends here the idea of my staying at Sevagram from the 3rd to 12th February. The purpose of my visit will be the unification of the various constructive work organisations.

This, however, could not be.

6

Jung has described present-day democracy as a "chronic state of mitigated civil war". Our war-like instincts are ineradicable. Psychologically speaking, democracy is a device, which by enabling the conflict to be carried on within its own national frame, "introverts war". In democracy, "our warlike instincts spend themselves in the form of domestic quarrels called 'political life'. We fight each other within the limits of law and constitution."⁶² The people in a democracy are averse to being involved in external conflicts because they want to be free to carry on their internal quarrel undisturbed. This accounts for

their "outward peaceful manner" but it does not eliminate strife from our midst. "We are far from being at peace with ourselves: on the contrary, we hate and fight each other, because we have succeeded in introverting war."⁶³ This is in itself a big advance. But we are far from the goal yet. "We still have enemies in the flesh, and we have not yet managed to introvert our political disharmonies into our personal selves. . . . Even our national mitigated state of war would come to end if everybody could see his own shadow and begin the only struggle which is really worth while, the fight against the overwhelming power-drive of our own shadow. . . . Our order would be perfect if people could only take their lust of combat home into themselves."⁶⁴

This needs some further explanation. Within our being there is a perpetual conflict going on between our higher and primitive instincts. But the sustained, strenuous effort needed to subdue the brute in us is in itself unpleasant. So, quite unawares, we choose the line of least resistance and seek an escape from our predicament by banishing the unpleasant fact from our conscious. This leaves us with our pent up antipathy, which unable to discharge itself in struggle, fixes itself upon some object outside us in which that particular trait is reflected so that this object in its turn becomes our *bete noire*. The struggle, thus, instead of being directed against the evil is diverted to its shadow. "Anything which disappears from your psychological inventory," Jung tells us, "is apt to turn up in the disguise of a hostile neighbour, where it will inevitably arouse your anger and make you aggressive. It is certainly better to know that your worst adversary is right in your own heart."⁶⁵

When things around us go wrong, said Gandhiji, the cause for it must be looked for within ourselves. We are the cause and makers of our surroundings. The outer is only a projection of the inner. As we are, so our universe becomes. To set right our environment, we must turn the searchlight inward and direct our crusading zeal against our own shortcomings. We shall then hate none, find fault with none, nor try to lord it over anybody, but feel at peace with the whole world.

Thus regarded, the problem of democracy resolves itself into the problem of achieving conquest over self. In his *Indian Home Rule* Gandhiji accordingly defined Swaraj or self-rule as "rule over self". "The root meaning of Swaraj is self-rule" or "disciplined rule from within".⁶⁶ "The outward freedom . . . that we shall attain, will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment."⁶⁷

Political self-government being self-government for a large number of men and women can be, he held, no better than individual self-government, and it is therefore "to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule."⁶⁸ He described himself as a "philosophical anarchist". Political power with him was not an end in itself but, "one of the means" for bettering

the condition of the people. "Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation is necessary."⁶⁹

Gandhiji rejected the view that the State is the "natural, necessary and final form of human organisation" (Hegel), in which all individual moralities and freedoms are merged and transcended and outside of which there can be neither any morality nor any freedom nor any social good; or that "in using force . . . the State is furthering the freedom of citizens as a whole" (Green). On the contrary he regarded "freedom to err and the duty of correcting errors"⁷⁰ as the soul of Swaraj or independence, and freedom of choice as the necessary precondition of moral action. "So long as we act like machines there can be no question of morality. If we want to call an action moral, it should have been done consciously and as a matter of duty. . . . No action can be called moral, unless it is prompted by a moral intention."⁷¹ "To make mistakes as a freeman," is therefore "better than being in bondage in order to avoid them" for the simple reason that "the mind of a man who remains good under compulsion cannot improve, in fact it worsens. And when compulsion is removed, all the defects well up to the surface with even greater force."⁷²

An ideal State thus, according to Gandhiji, would be "an ordered anarchy" or a "state of enlightened anarchy". "In such a State everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbours. In the ideal State therefore there is no political power because there is no State."⁷³

In practice this ideal, however, "is never fully realised".⁷⁴ Gandhiji admits that "nowhere in the world does a State without Government exist."⁷⁵ But that need not worry anybody. "Euclid's line is one without breadth but no-one has so far been able to draw it and never will. All the same it is only by keeping the ideal line in mind that we have made progress in geometry."⁷⁶ What is true of Euclid's line is true of every ideal. "I believe that a State can be administered on a non-violent basis if the vast majority of the people are non-violent."⁷⁷ "If we continue to work for such a society, it will slowly come into being to an extent such that the people can benefit by it."⁷⁸ It was Gandhiji's firm faith that if there was one country in the world where such a society could come into being, it was India. For "ours is the only country where the attempt has, at any rate, been made."⁷⁹

Since, however, for all practical purposes some sort of Government there must be and since no Government worth its name can suffer anarchy to prevail, Gandhiji set forth as the ideal to be aimed at "a predominantly non-violent Government" or a Government "that governs least" as the nearest approach to a self-regulated Stateless society. "A Government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-

violent, because it represents all the people. I do not today conceive of such a golden age. But I do believe in the possibility of a predominantly non-violent society. A Government representing such society will use the least amount of force.”⁸⁰

Gandhiji deliberately refused to define in advance the nature of Government in a society based on non-violence. All he could say was that “when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today.”⁸¹ Nor did he consider this to be necessary for the building of a non-violent State. He attached greater importance to the means. The final goal would be determined “not by our definitions but by our acts.”⁸² If they took care of the means, the ends would take care of themselves. Wherever the method of force had been used, the logic of the means had overruled the will and conscious purpose of those who employed them and dictated a course altogether different from what they had envisaged. In the result, the State instead of withering away, became more absolute, more ruthless, more authoritarian and all-embracing than any that had been known before. If the people were lacking in non-violence and self-restraint, exploitation and violence would continue in spite of democratic constitution. On the other hand, if they adopted a non-violent way of life, the non-violent State would emerge as the natural by-product of their practice of non-violence.

Can non-violence be used in politics? Gandhiji was once asked.

“It can be used in politics,” he answered, “precisely as it can be used in the domestic sphere. We may not be perfect in our use of it but we definitely discard the use of violence, and grow from failure to success.”⁸³

“Do you think it is a realisable ideal?” he was again asked.

“Yes,” he replied. “It is realisable to the extent non-violence is realisable.”

“You would govern non-violently but all legislation is violence,” the questioner persisted.

Gandhiji answered: “No, not all legislation. *Legislation imposed by the people upon themselves is non-violence to the extent it is possible in society.* A society organised and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be purest anarchy. . . . The nearest approach to purest anarchy would be a democracy based on non-violence. The European democracies are to my mind a negation of democracy.” (Italics mine).

“Do you think that non-violence or the democracy that you visualise was ever realised in the olden times?”

“I do not know. But . . . I have no doubt in my mind that at some stage we were wiser, and that we have to grow wiser than we are today in order to find what beauties are hidden in human nature.”

Some time after this, B. G. Kher, the ex-Chief Minister of Bombay,

with a party of co-workers came to Gandhiji. Considerable communal rioting had broken out in some parts of the Bombay Province and the Government had been forced to resort to firing at a number of places. All the members of the group were firm believers in non-violence. But they could not see how the firing could have been avoided. Gandhiji had been asking the Congress Ministers to carry on the administration non-violently. They asked him: Supposing he were in charge of the Government in independent India, how would he run the administration non-violently? In reply Gandhiji explained that in the case in issue, the question of administering non-violently could arise in a practical shape only if independence was won by non-violent means, in other words when the bulk of the country had been organised non-violently. The believers in non-violence would then be in the majority. It should not be difficult in that event to carry on administration without the help of the police and the military because the anti-social element would already have come under their control. "If, for instance, in Sevagram we have five or seven goondas in a population of seven hundred who are non-violently organised, the five or seven will either live under the discipline of the rest or leave the village. But you will see," he continued, "that I am answering the question with the utmost caution, and my truth makes me admit that we might have to maintain a police force."⁸⁴

In the following week he further developed the idea of administering non-violently in an article in *Harijan*. Whilst he did envisage a State, he observed, where the police would not be necessary, in practice he was prepared to concede that even in a non-violent State a police force might be necessary. "This, I admit, is a sign of my imperfect Ahimsa. I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without a police force as I have in respect of an army."⁸⁵ But this police force would be of a "wholly different pattern from the present-day police force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual cooperation they will easily deal with the ever decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact policemen will be reformers."⁸⁶

The function of this police would not be to put down labour strikes, as in a non-violent State "the influence of the non-violent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society"⁸⁷ and quarrels between labour and capital would therefore be few and far between. Similarly, it would not be employed to put down communal disturbances, or to suppress political opposition. Its function would primarily be to keep in check the anti-social elements.

Kher argued that the Congress Ministers had no non-violent

force at their disposal. Even if 500 goondas had run amok they would have wrought untold havoc. "I do not know how even you would have dealt with them."

Gandhiji answered that the Ministers on such occasions could have gone out and allowed themselves to be done to death by the goondas. This they had never tried. As the "dirty water from the gutter when it mixes with the water of the Ganges, becomes as pure as the Ganges water", even so he had expected that the goondas would work under the Congress discipline. But evidently the Ministers had not attained the "purifying potency of the fabled Ganges. . . . Let us face the fact that we had not the requisite Ahimsa. . . . I am sure that if we had adhered to strictest non-violence . . . the Congress would have made a tremendous advance in the direction of Ahimsa and also independence."

"The pity is," he remarked with his usual banter, "that no-one trusts me with the reins of Government! Otherwise I would show how to govern non-violently."⁸⁸

For twenty years the Congress leaders had professed faith in non-violence. Ever since they had come into power in 1937, Gandhiji had been telling them that by holding to the trail they had blazed, they could make history. In a meeting of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, he once described how after the Congress Ministries in the Provinces had resigned on the issue of India's participation in the war, one of the Congress Ministers came and told him that while he had not given up an iota of non-violence, he could not do without minimum firing. He had to resort to it to the extent that it was unavoidable. "He may have said it then," commented Gandhiji, "he may not say it again if I can help it."⁸⁹ The reason why the Ministers had to resort to force was that the Congress majorities were not based on unadulterated non-violence. Before they went in again, they should make it clear to the people that they could send them as their representatives only if they would let them carry on Government on a non-violent basis. It did not matter if they failed. But the failure should "apply to our inability to govern, not to our inability to abstain from the use of force."⁹⁰ Rather than abandon non-violence, they should step aside and let those who swore by the use of force to govern. The people would then rally round them and make it possible for them govern non-violently.

But his had remained a voice in the wilderness. The conclusion slowly forced itself upon him that the ways of power are inseparable from the exercise of power. No-one who wields power can remain unaffected by it. The only way to make the State approximate to the ideal of non-violence is progressively to reduce its functions and to act upon it from outside by developing non-violent sanctions among the people. In other words, the more there is of social organisation and

spontaneous voluntary cooperation among the people, the less there will be of the State and the application of the sanctions which the State wields. In the past, before independence, constructive work organisations had been the source of the non-violent strength behind the Congress. What was to be the corresponding source of strength behind the free India Government? It was for the Congress to take up that role. The Congress leaders, as members of the Government which was based on force, might find themselves unable to renounce the use of force. But surely they had not made of force their ideal. No-one would be happier than they, Gandhiji fancied, if they could conduct the Government by non-violence. For that the Congress would have to be reconstituted on a new basis. It would have to lay upon itself a self-denying ordinance and keep out of power. He had been pressing that course on the Congress leaders ever since independence.

A few days before the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in November, 1947, Gandhiji mooted the idea that the political goal of the Congress having been achieved with the attainment of independence, the Congress ought voluntarily to liquidate itself. The dissolution of the Congress as a party would release the energy of all the progressive and patriotic elements in the country and harness it to the great task of nation building. There were many dynamic workers who could do a lot but the country was not getting the full benefit of their services owing to organisational differences. The Congress leaders were afraid that without the Congress machinery to back them, they would lose their hold over the electorate and the future of their new-born democracy would be jeopardised. Gandhiji regarded this as a sign of timidity incompatible with a nation builder's role. In the course of a conversation with a colleague he expressed his fear that the Congress leadership were losing the dauntless courage of their early fighting days and the habit of taking bold risks. "If we say to ourselves that Swaraj having been won, we can now afford to sit easy we shall be doing the country the greatest harm. Unless we can harness the energy of the entire nation to the work of nation building during the first five years of independence, the achievement of our last 30 years' struggle will be in jeopardy. Hitherto the fight with the British engaged all the energy of our people. That energy must now be mobilised to make the nation prosperous and strong, or else it will recoil upon us and breed discord and disruption."

He was deeply worried over the growing corruption and scramble for loaves and fishes in the Congress and discord and personal rivalries among members of the Congress High Command. After the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, he repeated his advice: "I am convinced that no patch-work treatment can save the Congress. It will only prolong the agony. The best thing for the Congress would be to dissolve itself before the rot sets in further. Its voluntary liquidation

will brace up and purify the political climate of the country. But I can see that I can carry nobody with me in this."

A letter in the second week of December, 1947, from a top-ranking Andhra leader, universally respected for his self-sacrifice, courage and integrity and affectionately nick-named during the early days of non-cooperation by the people as "the Gandhi of the South", revealed a shocking state of affairs. "I, old, decrepit, with a broken leg slowly limping on crutches within the walls of my house have no axe to grind," wrote this veteran of many a Satyagraha fight, to bring home to Gandhiji "the moral degradation into which the men in Congress circles have fallen."

Several of the M.L.A.s and M.L.C.s, are following the policy 'make hay while the sun shines', making money by the use of influence even to the extent of obstructing the administration of justice in the criminal courts. . . . The district collectors and other revenue officials do not feel free in the discharge of their duties on account of the frequent interference by the M.L.A.s and M.L.C.s. . . . A strict and honest officer cannot hold his position. . . . The factions in the Congress circles and the weakness of the Ministers have been creating a rebellious spirit amongst the people at large. The people have begun to say that the British Government was much better and they are even cursing the Congress.

Commented Gandhiji on receiving the letter: "Our moral standards are going down at such a rate that I can now see why our Satyagraha fights in the past lacked the real content and were reduced to mere passive resistance of the weak." The only chance of saving the Congress was in having as a Congress President one who would act with firmness and impartiality in the midst of the growing welter of confusion. For that the Congress organisation would need to be beyond the pulls and strains of power politics. Otherwise it would disintegrate. Rather than that fate should overtake it, it was much better to dissolve it. "The letter from Andhra today is to me a sure sign of the decay and decline of the Congress. If all that is said therein is true, does it not show that we are fit only to be slaves?"

At his evening prayer gathering, on the 12th December, 1947, he warned: "Let the people of . . . other Provinces measure the words of this self-sacrificing servant of India. As he rightly says, the corruption described by him is no monopoly of Andhra. . . . Let us beware."

In the week following he again remarked that if a big national organisation like the Congress could not be purged of corruption, untruth and such other unseemly practices, and if its infiltration by

self-seekers could not be stopped, it was clear that its doom was sealed and he would not shed a tear if it disappeared. "If a patient cannot be cured of a fell disease, the best thing that can happen to him is to pass away."

There were pocket boroughs, bogus membership, the dead-weight of inert majorities and the electioneering mal-practices and hypocrisy of self-seekers. Everybody was anxious to get into the bandwagon of the Congress, now that the Congress was in power. The more Gandhiji saw of this, the more his conviction deepened that there was no other way of purging the Congress organisation of corruption except for the Congress to go out of power politics and let the administration be run through the people's representatives who would nevertheless be under Congress discipline. By keeping out of power politics and devoting itself exclusively to the building of the non-violent strength of the people the Congress would become the watchdog and guardian of the people's liberties.

In the last week of January, 1948, Gandhiji was explaining to Vincent Sheean (*Lead Kindly Light*) his theory of representative democracy backed by a non-violent sanction. The point at issue was: "If those who believe in the ideal of non-violence keep away from Government, Government will continue to be carried on by the use of force. How is then the transformation of the existing system of Government to be brought about?"

Gandhiji admitted that ordinarily Government was impossible without the use of force. "I have therefore said that a man who wants to be good and do good in all circumstances must not hold power."

"Is all Government to come to a standstill then?" he was asked.

"No," he replied. "He (the man of non-violence) can send those to the Government who represent his will. If he goes there himself, he exposes himself to the corrupting influence of power. But my representative holds power of attorney only during my pleasure. If he falls a prey to temptation, he can be recalled. I cannot recall myself. All this requires a high degree of intelligence on the part of the electorate. There are about half a dozen constructive work organisations. I do not send them to the Parliament. I want them to keep the Parliament under check by educating and guiding the voters."

"You mean to say that power always corrupts?"

"Yes."

On the same day in an article for *Harijan*, he wrote: "Indian National Congress . . . which has after many battles fought her non-violent way to freedom cannot be allowed to die. It can only die with the nation. A living organism ever grows or it dies. The Congress has won political freedom, but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom. These freedoms are harder than the political, if only because they are constructive, less exciting and not

spectacular. All-embracing constructive work evokes the energy of all the units of the millions. The Congress has got the preliminary and necessary part of her freedom. The hardest has yet to come. In its difficult ascent to democracy, it has inevitably created rotten boroughs leading to corruption and creation of institutions, popular and democratic only in name. How to get out of the weedy and unwieldy growth?"⁹¹

He then proceeded to explain why it had become imperative for the Congress to apply that self-denying ordinance to itself and how it should refashion itself for its new role. Hitherto its franchise used to be based on four-anna primary membership. This was no longer enough. "The Congress *must* do away with its special register of members. . . . Its register should now be co-extensive with all the men and women in the voters' rolls in the country. The Congress business should be to see that no faked name gets in and no legitimate name is left out. On its own register it will have a body of servants of the nation who would be workers doing the work allotted to them from time to time."

A necessary consequence of this reorientation would be that the centre of gravity would have to shift from the urban to the rural. "Unfortunately for the country they (the workers) will be drawn chiefly for the time being from the city dwellers, most of whom would be required to work for and in the villages of India. The ranks must be filled in increasing numbers from villagers.

"These servants will be expected to operate upon and serve the voters registered according to law in their own surroundings. Many persons and parties will woo them. The very best will win. Thus and in no other way can the Congress regain its fast ebbing unique position in the country. But yesterday the Congress was unwittingly the servant of the nation, it was *khudai khidmatgar*—God's servant. Let it now proclaim to itself and to the world that it is only God's servant—nothing more, nothing less. *If it engages in the ungainly skirmish for power, it will find one fine morning that it is no more.* Thank God, it is now no longer in sole possession of the field." (Italics mine).

He had hoped to return to the subject in the columns of *Harijan* and discuss what the servants of the nation would have to do to raise themselves in the estimation of the masters, the whole of the adult population, male and female. This was not given him to do. But he outlined his ideas on this as well as on the reconstitution of the Congress in a draft plan, based upon the constitution committee's recommendations. It was prepared by him on the last day of his earthly sojourn, but it could be published only posthumously. It subsequently came to be known as his "Last Will and Testament" to the nation (see Vol. II, Appendix B).

The preamble of the draft ran: "Though split into two, India

having attained political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e. as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. . . . For these and other similar reasons, the All-India Congress Committee resolves to disband the existing Congress organisation and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh."

The Lok Sevak Sangh would affiliate the various existing constructive work organisations like All-India Spinners' Association, All-India Village Industries Association, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Harijan Sevak Sangh, and the Go-seva Sangh.

The plan of organisation would be that every Panchayat of five adult men or women being villagers or village-minded would form a unit. Two such contiguous Panchayats would form a working party under a leader elected from among themselves. When there were one hundred such Panchayats, the fifty first-grade leaders would elect from among themselves a second-grade leader and so on, the first-grade leaders meanwhile working under the second-grade leader. Parallel groups of two hundred Panchayats would continue to be formed till they covered the whole of India, each succeeding groups of Panchayats electing a second-grade leader after the manner of the first. All second-grade leaders would serve jointly for the whole of India and severally for their respective areas. The second-grade leaders might elect, whenever they might deem necessary, from among themselves a chief who would, during pleasure, regulate and command all the groups. This body of servants would derive their authority or power purely from service "ungrudgingly and wisely done to their master, the whole of India."

After prescribing the necessary qualifications which every worker must possess, viz. that he should be a habitual wearer of Khadi, free from all addictions and vices, if a Hindu, should have abjured untouchability, be a believer in the principle of equal respect and regard for all religions and "equality of opportunity and status for all irrespective of race, creed or sex", the draft plan went on to detail the various functions of the workers. These pertained mostly to the elementary service and education of the villages, particularly with a view to attaining local and regional self-sufficiency in respect of their primary needs, with an emphasis on the non-violent aspect of it and wisely to guide them in the proper and intelligent use of their voting rights.

The last portion of the preamble to the "Last Will and Testament" referred to the impending struggle for ascendancy between the civil and the military power. "The struggle for the ascendancy of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress

towards its democratic goal. It (the Congress) must (therefore) be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal bodies."

India had an unbroken tradition of non-violence from times immemorial. But at no time in her ancient history had she complete non-violence in action pervading the whole land. Nevertheless it was Gandhiji's unquenchable faith that it was her destiny to deliver the message of non-violence to mankind. "Of all the countries in the world, India is the only country which can learn the art of non-violence. . . . If the test were applied even now, there would be found, perhaps, thousands of men and women who would be willing to die without harbouring malice against their persecutors."⁹² It might take ages to come to fruition, he said, but so far as he could judge "no other country will precede her in the fulfilment of that mission."⁹³ If India took to the doctrine of the sword she would cease to be the pride of his heart. "India's acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting. My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to service of India through the religion of non-violence."⁹⁴

It seemed, testing time had at last arrived. It was for those who had faith in the method of non-violence to reaffirm their faith "to keep the lamp of non-violence burning bright." Even if a few remained true to their light in the midst of the impenetrable darkness all would be well. "The truth of a few will count, the untruth of millions will vanish even like chaff before a whiff of wind," he had said before.⁹⁵ He refused to believe that what could not be achieved during the struggle for independence was unachievable at all times. "On the contrary, today there is a real opportunity to demonstrate the supremacy of Ahimsa. True, our people have been sucked into the whirlpool of universal militarisation. If even a few can keep out of it, it will be their privilege to set an example of Ahimsa of the brave and be reckoned as the first servants of India. This cannot be demonstrated by mere intellect. Therefore till it can be realised through experience, it must be accepted in faith."

And this appeared in *Harijan* two days after his death.

EPILOGUE

1

What message has Gandhiji for the present-day world, and what significance or validity has it in relation to the question of questions that faces us today?

The world today stands uneasily poised on the brink of a catastrophe. Science has given man almost unlimited control over natural forces. But it has not taught him how to control himself. No easy way has yet been found of reforming human nature. The eradication of the primordial passions of hatred and fear, lust and greed, possessiveness, anger and egotism that lurk beneath the thin veneer of our culture and civilisation continues to be as slow, laborious and uphill a task as it ever was. Evil has taken wings but good continues to walk at the proverbial snail's pace.

This lop-sided development of man threatens our entire future. The discovery of the atom bomb and the hydrogen bomb has for the first time brought the extinction of all life and the destruction of our planet itself by the undisciplined mind of man within the range of possibility. It is, as Jung put it, as if a little boy of six were given dynamite amongst his birthday presents. "How can we save the child," he asks, "from the dynamite that nobody can take away from him? The good spirit of humanity is challenged as never before. . . . It is now a question of existence or non-existence."¹

How can the peril be countered? Is there a power that can control power and yet will not, "like the military power, which is all we have today to put against the might of the aggressors", frustrate itself? And if so, what is its nature; how can it be evoked, harnessed and put to use? That is the question to which, like the Riddle of the Sphinx, civilisation must find an answer, or perish. "It is time, high time," Jung warns, "that civilised man turned his mind to the fundamental things."²

The atom bomb is the ultimate of brute force. But, as Gandhiji pointed out, "behind the death-dealing bomb there is the human hand that releases it, and behind that still, is the human heart that sets the hand in motion."³ The final battle for the survival of civilisation and perhaps of the human race itself has thus to be fought in the psyche of man which is "in the last resort . . . the place of origin of all action, and therefore everything which happens by the will of man."⁴ If we could control the psyche of the individual, who manipulates atomic

power, it should give us the power to control the diabolical power which the run-away science of man threatens to unleash.

Science has taught us to think in terms of causality (law of cause and effect) but somehow we are inclined to think that while the law of causality holds good in respect of the physical world, phenomena pertaining to the world of the spirit lie outside its operation. This is illogical and inconsistent with the fundamental premiss of science which postulates the existence of an all-embracing ultimate principle that will interpret and explain the entire range of phenomena within human experience. "Science is nothing but the finding of unity."⁵ "Unity. . . is the necessary hypothesis upon which the constructions of science rest."⁶

There is only one Reality. The law, therefore, cannot be in two sections—one applying to the world of matter, the other to the world of spirit. The same law must hold good in respect of both the hemispheres of what constitutes an integral whole.

"Nature speaks in symbols and in signs," sang Whittier. "The laws of the inner psychic substance are of necessity the same as those of outside reality," affirms that great savant and philosopher Romain Rolland. "And if you succeed in reading one properly, the chances are that you will find the confirmation (if not, the presentiment) of what you have read or will read in the other."⁷ He cites the testimony of Sir J.C. Bose, the celebrated botanist, that before he began an experiment with plants, he preconceived their reactions within himself. The same has been testified by other great scientists and experimenters—Leonardo De Vinci, Wallace and Faraday, to mention only a few. With poets and artists it is still more so. This would be inconceivable if in Nature's face were not hidden, as in a "code-script", the eternal laws that govern both matter and spirit; if physical laws had not their analogic counterpart in the spiritual world, both being alike

". . . the workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;

Characters of the great Apocalypse.
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first and last and midst, and without end."

The ancient seers of India declared that macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm—*Yatha pinde tatha brahmande*. That which exists in the one must, therefore, exist equally in the other.

Einstein has given us his well-known equation setting forth the relationship between mass and energy which states that when even an infinitesimal particle of matter attains the velocity of light, the maximum velocity attainable in the physical world, it acquires a mass which is infinite. The corresponding law governing the release of spi-

ritual energy is to be found in the formula enunciated by Gandhiji, viz. that even an infinitesimal of an individual, when he has realised the ideal of Ahimsa in its fullness so that in thought, word and deed, he—in short his whole being—becomes a function of Ahimsa as it were, he becomes filled with its power, the power of love, soul force, truth force, or the godhead within us, to which there is no limit and before which all hatred and opposition must cease: “With Satya combined with Ahimsa you can bring the world to your feet.”⁸ “When once it is set in motion its effect, if it is intensive enough, can overtake the whole universe.”⁹ Working under this law, indeed “one perfect civil resister (Satyagrahi) is enough to win the battle of Right against Wrong.”¹⁰ The condition is that he must have ceased to have a separate will of his own—by absolute surrender to the spirit of Truth which is God. Testified Gandhiji: “There comes a time when an individual becomes irresistible and his action becomes all-pervasive in its effect. This comes when he reduces himself to zero.”¹¹

He gave its rationale as follows: “If we shatter the chains of egotism and melt into the ocean of humanity, we share its majesty. To feel that we are something is to set up a barrier between God and ourselves; to cease feeling that we are something is to become one with God. A drop in the ocean partakes of the greatness of its parent, although it is unconscious of it. But it is dried up as soon as it enters upon an existence independent of the ocean. . . . God is continuously in action without resting for a single moment. If we . . . become one with Him, our activity must be as unwearied as His. There may be momentary rest in store for the drop which is separated from the ocean, but not for the drop in the ocean, which knows no rest. . . . As soon as we become one with the ocean in the shape of God, there is no more rest for us, nor indeed do we need rest any longer. Our very sleep is action. For we sleep with the thought of God in our hearts. This restlessness constitutes true rest. This never-ceasing agitation holds the key to peace ineffable. This supreme state of total surrender is difficult to describe, but not beyond the bounds of human experience. . . . All our observances and activities are calculated to assist us in reaching it. We shall reach it some day all unawares if we have truth in us.”¹²

There is an ancient Indian philosophical doctrine that one who has lived the law of his essential being—truth as one knows it and which is natural to one’s being—without a single deviation from it throughout his life, can cause anything to happen by the simple act of calling to witness the power of “God which is Truth and Truth which is God.” Such a one becomes a “living conduit of cosmic power, the power of truth (*satya*)”, “the highest expression of the soul.”¹³ This is known as *sacchakriya* or making an “act of Truth”. The Truth must be firmly rooted in the heart so that it manifests itself in action as

infinite compassion or identification with everything that feels. "To realise God is to see Him in all that lives, i.e. to realise our oneness with all creation."¹⁴

2

H. G. Wells, in one of his writings, predicted that the coming years would be "essentially a century of Applied Psychology" which would "mark a revolution in human affairs altogether more profound . . . than that merely material revolution . . . amidst whose achievements we live."¹⁵ But it is significant of our times that while the possibility of physical innovations, however startling, encounters no resistance in our mind, the very idea of the human spirit revealing a new dimension, a new faculty or a higher psychic power, is laughed out of court as a necromantic fantasy, at best an overwrought mystic's dream. Yet it is in some such development that the hope of the future lies. Our present dimensions, the greatest of living Indian philosophers, Dr. Radhakrishnan, reminds us, are not the ultimate limit of our being.

The *Upanishads* tell us that the Creator having created man, turned the windows of man's mind outward, extraverted his sense organs, so that he became cut off from communication with his inner being that constitutes his real self. This is another way of saying that man has, owing to his preoccupation more and more with the objective, visible world, the world of his senses, lost touch with the subjective, invisible, inner world of his psyche and its laws. His psychology has in consequence failed to keep pace with his physics and the very inventions that he has called into being today threaten to turn against and overwhelm him. It is necessary, therefore, a savant tells us, that "every insight into the outer world must be balanced by an equally enlarged knowledge of his (man's) true and full nature. . . . He must find a Moral Law which is just as objective, as the laws which he perceives in the physical realm" if society is to be saved.¹⁶ This inner law may also be called the psychic law.

Recognition of law provides us with a sanction. Man could make no use of steam or electricity till he had by his intelligence mastered the laws governing them. Having done that, he can today harness them and they provide him with power. The inner universe of man, Gandhiji affirmed, is governed by laws that are as immutable, as self-sanctioning and capable of as precise and objective a handling as, for instance, the laws of motion that govern the world of matter. But we have neglected the science of the spirit. In the result, we are not able to make use of the vast store of spiritual or psychic energy lying dormant within us. This energy, Gandhiji maintained, is "more positive than electricity and more powerful than even

ether". It has at the core of it a principle "which is self-acting".¹⁷ Unconsciously, the bulk of mankind make use of this force in their daily life. It is the law of our being. But only conscious and intelligent practice of it can give us the power that we need to control power and make our psychology as practical as our physics. "When the practice of the law becomes universal," affirmed Gandhiji, "God will reign on earth as He does in Heaven. . . . Earth and Heaven are in us. We know the earth, and we are strangers to the Heaven within us."¹⁸

The law will of course work whether we accept it or not. But "just as a scientist will work wonders out of various applications of the laws of nature, even so a man who applies the law of love with *scientific precision* can work greater wonders. . . . Only our explorations have not gone far enough and so it is not possible for everyone to see all its working."¹⁹ (Italics mine). It is our inertia or laziness, said Gandhiji, that stands in our way. "If we have made unexpected progress in physical sciences, why may we do less in the science of the soul?" he asks.²⁰ "There are many powers lying hidden within us. . . . We discover them by constant struggle. Even so may we find the Supreme Power if we make diligent search with the fixed determination to find Him."²¹

This, however, calls for an ampler psychology than is at present practised — a new science of the spirit — and far more delicate and subtler techniques than the sense-distracted mind of a man unpractised in the various spiritual disciplines can wield.

True practice of Ahimsa, Gandhiji held, calls for "the keenest intelligence" in one who practises it and "wide-awake" conscience. "One cannot be sure of the purity of one's intention until one has gone through the whole course of spiritual training laid down by masters of *yoga* like Patanjali. Perfect *chittashuddhi* (purification of the senses) cannot be achieved in any other way."²²

As an integral part and foundation of Patanjali's system of *yoga* are the *yamas* and *niyamas*—cardinal spiritual disciplines and rules of conduct. Those who made experiments to discover the secret of the Supreme Power, which in individuals manifests itself as soul-force, averred Gandhiji, came to the conclusion that there are certain conditions to be observed in making those experiments. "Just as for conducting scientific experiments there is an indispensable scientific course of instruction, in the same way, strict preliminary discipline is necessary to qualify a person to make experiments in the spiritual realm."²³ It was on the observance of these disciplines that Gandhiji's whole life was based. It made every activity of his, whether individual or institutional, social, economic or political, an experiment in the practice of these disciplines and a means for attaining perfection in the same.

The rock-bottom foundation of the technique for achieving the power of non-violence is belief in the essential oneness of all

life. Individual psyches have been likened to innumerable coral reefs widely separated each from the other by the circumambient ocean but all united with one another at the base on the ocean floor from which they are sprung. The achievement of soul force depends on re-establishing our unity consciously with all psyches which manifestly exists beneath the threshold of individual consciousness and communicating that experience to others.

"I believe in *advaita*," declared Gandhiji. "I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent."²⁴ When this is taken as not merely text-book philosophy but is practised as a living faith, certain inevitable results follow. To quote Gandhiji: "Whenever I see an erring man, I say to myself, I have also erred; when I see a lustful man, I say to myself, so was I once; and in this way I feel kinship with every one in the world and feel that I cannot be happy without the humblest of us being happy."²⁵

"By their fruits ye shall know them." The fruit of the spirit, declared St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness." To one who has realised oneness of all life, the practice of the law of forgiveness and of vicarious suffering becomes his second nature. Sustained practice provides in the intensest and most vivid form a dramatisation of the experience of this wider consciousness and thereby becomes a means for communicating the same to others so that any injury done to another is seen and felt to be as hurt or injury done to oneself and vice versa.

Thus the individual may be brought back to a recognition of his essential oneness with his fellows from which he has been alienated by his ceaseless pursuit of ego-centered sense-activities, and to the law of his being restored, the self-sanctioning quality which should belong to it in common with the physical laws. When Gandhiji forgave and suffered for the love of those who did wrong, they all suffered with him and not only they but humanity at large in every part of the world. And the secret of it was his ceaseless, unrelenting practice of the law of love "which sublimates all possessiveness as well as all desires" and of which the five cardinal observances or basic spiritual disciplines are five natural sub-sections "or five test points in what is a single commandment, viz. to love all mankind as oneself." It made his whole life an "act of truth".

3

Ours has been called the psychic age. "The gigantic catastrophes that threaten *us*," observes Jung, ". . . are psychic events

Man is exposed today to the elemental forces of his own psyche."²⁶ Wars and such upheavals of violence are in their fundamental nature "psychic epidemics". Behind these phenomena is the individual neurosis and the mass neurosis that afflicts our age.

The dividing line between the normal and the abnormal individual is notoriously thin. It is common knowledge, psychiatrists tell us that "only the very smallest fraction of so-called psychopaths lands in the asylum. The overwhelming majority constitutes . . . 'normal' part of the population."²⁷ But when these very people congregate together, "abnormal phenomena appear." The outcrop of dictatorships and totalitarianism which the world has of late witnessed, is an outward symbol of an inner pathological condition of man that has become general. The increase in the material means of existence, which the march of invention has made possible, unaccompanied by an adequate end, has given rise to a psychic imbalance of which "the spectre of futility and frustration" that haunts society, "the boredom that drives men to drink, drugs and the mass murder of war"²⁸ are some of the concomitant symptoms.

Totalitarianism represents a "compensatory move" of the unconscious. "The individual's feeling of weakness, and indeed non-existence" is "compensated by the upheaval of desire for power."²⁹ The individual becomes a dictator and a totalitarian "because he cannot live without an end adequate to control and to express his means. . . . Hence he strives to create out of his nation a being in which he may experience a pre-individual solidarity"³⁰ which he misses within himself.

Reason by itself is not very helpful in such a case. "The intellect—that handy man—can put it this way and in quite a different way too."³¹ But when even one man comes forth with "objective, psychic fact" of his experience, "hard as granite and heavy as lead", he becomes a liberating force, a beacon light to all. It was this quality that gave to Gandhiji's utterances and even unuttered thoughts, signs, gestures, even silences, the power of direct action so that they partook of the nature of historic events. His power of inspiring confidence and swaying the minds of men was rooted in the depth, intensity and fullness of his inner experience.

What our era needs above all is such a "liberating personality". There is a saying of a Chinese Master which runs: "When the enlightened man is alone and thinks rightly, he can be heard a thousand miles away."

The Upanishadic theory of cosmic evolution by extraversion states that when the One willed Himself to become many, one part of the primal consciousness became differentiated as the individual psyche, the other evolved into the senses and the sense organs. Put in the language of modern psychology, this would mean that at

some stage of its evolution man's individual psyche underwent a fragmentation, or, as Gerald Heard has put it, suffered a double fracture. As a result, one aspect of it became "fore-conscious" and developed into the inventive faculty, the other, the unmanifest, became the sunken or submerged continent of the subconscious. The second fracture came when the individual psyche, becoming more and more ego-bound, lost the pre-individual awareness of its essential oneness with all psyches. Neurosis is "self division". The fragmentation of the individual psyche into two parts, cut off and estranged from each other, set up a conflict inside the individual and made him neurotic. The loss of awareness of the essential oneness of all life sowed the seed of social conflict, which could be controlled only by an increasing use of external sanctions—culminating in the advent of the atom bomb.

The three problems that face us today thus are: (1) How can the individual regain the sense of his wholeness so that he ceases to be neurotic? (2) How can we regain awareness of our essential oneness with our fellows—an awareness as keen as our awareness of the world of visible things? (3) How can a non-violent sanction for society be developed that will take the place of external sanctions by which society is at present regulated, and enable us to do away with them?

Gandhiji's answer to these questions is: (1) By the practice of the gospel of selfless action we can shake off the dominance of our senses or the "fore-conscious" aspect of our being. Thus would the different levels of our being be reunited and man cease to be at war with himself. (2) By sustained practice of the law of love we can re-establish our essential unity with our fellows, and by building a social order based upon the practice of that principle we can communicate that experience of unifying consciousness to the people at large. (3) By progressive identification with all that lives, we can re-establish communion with the transcendental psychic substance "which is not capable of existing in the plural" and of which all individual psyches are specialised forms. By so doing, we become the vehicle of the Power of Truth, the Ultimate Reality which alone is and besides which all else is naught. This power, otherwise known as the power of Ahimsa, love, or soul force should give us the non-violent sanction which will enable us to cope with the forces of violence that threaten us and civilisation.

4

Gandhiji described the science of Satyagraha, as conceived by him, as a "science in the making".³² He did not claim to have worked it out in its entirety. In fact, he maintained, "it does not

lend itself to such treatment. So far as I know, no single physical science does, not even the very exact science of mathematics.”³³ Partly for this reason, he discouraged attempts to formulate it into a system in his lifetime. The practice of Satyagraha turns upon certain basic assumptions which by their very nature can neither be proved nor disproved. Their validity can be tested only by experience. It is the same in mathematics. “Irrational numbers”, square root of a minus quantity for instance, cannot be visualised. Nor can their meaning be expressed in logical terms but only by the use of symbols. They, however, help us to solve problems in applied science by the manipulation of those symbols. Similarly, the truth of the fundamental concepts on which the practice of Satyagraha is based has to be experienced before we can make use of its power in mundane affairs.

“I have often said,” Gandhiji once observed, “. . . that even if all our scriptures were to perish, one *mantra* of *Ishopanishad* was enough to declare the essence of Hinduism. But even that one verse will be of no avail if there is no-one to live it.”³⁴

This was what Gandhiji meant when he said that non-violence cannot be preached. It has to be lived. Some of his outstanding contributions to the development of its techniques can, however, be gleaned from his life and writings.

(1) The acquisition of the spirit of non-resistance is admittedly “a matter of long training in self-denial and appreciation of the hidden forces within ourselves.”³⁵ How can its practice then be brought within the capacity of the people at large? Whilst it was true, said Gandhiji, that the “votaries” alone, i.e. “the few who take the vow of non-possession and the allied abstinences” could “*carry on research work and declare from time to time the new possibilities of the great eternal law governing man, if it is a law, it must hold good for all.*”³⁶ (Italics mine).

It was the hall-mark of Gandhiji’s genius that he discovered ways of working out perfectionist goals through imperfect tools, which has been the bug-bear of idealists in all ages. The core of his discovery was that all need not possess “the same measure of conscious non-resistance for its full operation. It is enough for one person only to possess it even as one General is enough to regulate and dispose of the energy of millions of soldiers who enlist under his banner, even though they know not the why and the wherefore of his dispositions.”³⁷ Thus, thousands of men and women who took part in Salt Satyagraha were not free from anger and hate in their daily conduct; they were very imperfect human beings. “Their belief in non-violence was unintelligent. . . . But their belief in their leaders was genuine.”³⁸ And that, said Gandhiji, was enough. They harboured no ill-will towards anyone when they collected contraband salt in their numbers. Their soldierly discipline linked to the General’s *sadhana* of non-violence made them formidable.

With those, however, who lead, it is a different matter. "Their belief has got to be intelligent and they have to live up to all the implications of the belief."³⁹

As Gandhiji advanced farther and farther into his researches, he was led to lay increasing emphasis on the cultivation of individual perfection as the key to the organisation and release of the power of non-violence of the masses. "In the battle of non-violence," he told Norman Cliff of the *News Chronicle*, "it has been single individuals who have been able most effectively to demonstrate the potency of non-violence." To Mirabeau he explained: Ahimsa is unmanifest. "People cannot realise the unmanifest. When spirit becomes flesh, then they can see and understand it."⁴⁰ Hence the need to "become Ahimsa-made-flesh."

(2) Psyche is a whole. It is so constituted that "everything" in it is "connected with everything else".⁴¹ It cannot therefore be dealt with sectionally. The striving for non-violence must embrace every field of the striver's life. Principle among these is the domestic field where "the alphabet of Ahimsa is best learnt."⁴² It is here that a beginning has to be made. We are all at times apt to act like little dictators in our homes. It is not therefore lack of will but capacity that distinguishes us from the totalitarians and dictators on a bigger scale. We have to take the beam out of our own eye before we can point out with any effect the mote in that of another. The discipline of non-violence has to show in our domestic relationships before its influence can make itself felt outside.

(3) Next comes the economic sphere. The striving for non-violence consists in self-transcendence. But our society is today so constituted that it can keep its economy going only by multiplying wants, i.e. by inflaming desire. Based as it is on competition, greed and fear, it forces upon the individual values which reduce his life to a denial in action of the goal of self-transcendence. It was for this reason that the Buddha laid such stress on "right livelihood".⁴³ In recent times John Woolman, the American Quaker, refrained from selling West Indian sugar and rum to customers who came to his shop because these things were the products of slave labour. He made his journeys on foot because driving in a horse carriage would have indirectly made him party to the inhuman treatment that was meted out to horses and to post boys in his days. "As well hope to continue evolution (towards the goal of attaining wider consciousness) in our competitive society where the aims are to satisfy the ego and to stabilise it by addictions, possessions, pretensions," observes Gerald Heard, "as to rear from seed, orchids in the arctic." For humanity to reach its goal of a higher psychic evolution is needed a society based on the practice of the law of love—a society in which not individual gain but service of one's fellows as a means of self-trans-

cendence is the essential motive of all activities (see Vol. I, pages 539-49).

To provide in miniature a working model of this type of society and a demonstration of the cardinal spiritual disciplines in action, on which the practice of non-violence is based, Gandhiji instituted the Ashram way of life or community living. It was the means he used to introduce among the people, the leaven of basic spiritual disciplines, which provided the energy and drive for Satyagraha campaigns. Very imperfect models these Ashrams were. Even so they served to create a new climate wherever they sprang up. The practice of the law of love even in infinite dilutions, when embodied in the lives of the millions, Gandhiji found, alters the basic pattern of reactions of all concerned on either side of the combat line and in its cumulative effect produces results that are astounding. It was the Ashrams that had sprung up all over the country which helped Gandhiji to organise and sustain his non-violent campaigns during India's fight for freedom. Wherever there was an Ashram, people learnt the secret of Satyagraha; wherever there was a Satyagraha campaign, there sprang up Ashrams in its wake. They set not only the pattern of the type of the worker that was needed for organising his non-violent mass movements but of the non-violent type of organisation, too, so much so that, as Gandhiji put it, whatever institution he took up—whether it was the Congress, Harijan Sevak Sangh, or a nature-cure home—he turned it into the likeness of an Ashram.

(4) In the days of old, so runs the ancient Indian tradition, whenever all ordinary means failed people resorted to *tapasya*—penance. Gandhiji defined *tapasya* as “single-minded devotion” and striving, which sublimates or consumes every other longing or desire, in the pursuit of an ideal. “*Tapasya* is of various kinds. Misguided men can resort to it. . . . The wise also can do it. . . . It was by dint of *tapasya* that Western scientists made their discoveries.”⁴⁴

The *tapasya* that will “quicken the conscience of those who believe in Ahimsa,” said Gandhiji, “is the fulfilment of . . . constructive programme. . . . Those who will carry it out in faith, in full knowledge, and without the slightest fuss will have done their share in the *tapasya* to quench the conflagration.”⁴⁵

“Even if there is one individual who is almost completely non-violent,” Gandhiji had maintained, “he can put out the conflagration.”⁴⁶ This, however, is a *tapasya* which very few can perform. He therefore suggested a *tapasya* in accordance with the spirit of our times which could easily be performed by the people at large. “In this age of democracy it is essential that desired results are achieved by the collective effort of the people. It will no doubt be good to achieve an objective through the effort of a supremely powerful individual, but it can never make the community conscious of its corporate

strength. An individual's success will be like a millionaire doling free food to millions of starving people. We should, therefore, bend our energies to the fulfilment of . . . constructive programme."⁴⁷

(5) "Anything that millions can do together," Gandhiji said, "becomes charged with a unique power."⁴⁸ The condition is that it should be instinct with meaning, i.e. a purposive awareness on the doer's part, otherwise it becomes a fetish. To provide a day-to-day exercise in self-transcendence and transvaluation of values, in however limited a measure, and as a means of identification with the least, Gandhiji instituted universal sacramental spinning. "This thing has come in my search after the technique of non-violence," he declared referring to the spinning-wheel. "And each day that passes makes my faith brighter."⁴⁹ He carried into it the same spirit of experimental research and scientific precision as characterised his practice of other spiritual observances. "The wheel as such is lifeless but when I invest it with symbolism, it becomes a living thing for me. Its sound, if it is musical, is in tune with non-violence. If it is unmusical, it is not in tune with it, for it indicates carelessness on my part."⁵⁰ One had, therefore to be "meticulously careful about every part of the wheel." Then and then only would spinning be "a true sacrificial act."⁵¹

(6) As occupational therapy for their psychic illness, the spinning-wheel, said Gandhiji, could be taken up by the people of the West with the greatest benefit. An American Press correspondent, Andrew Freeman, who had been attending the spinning classes started by Gandhiji in the Bhangi Colony at the time of the Cabinet Mission's negotiations in 1946, once asked him: "Has the spinning-wheel a message for America? Can it serve as a counter-weapon to the atom bomb?"

"I do feel," replied Gandhiji, "that it has a message for . . . the whole world. . . . The world is spinning in the wrong direction. It must reverse itself and spin its own thread and yarn. It must return to handicrafts produced at home and thereby repudiate the machine that spawned the device by which mankind can destroy itself. Hand-spinning is the beginning of the economic freedom, equality and peace. The saving of the entire world lies in the adoption of this little device. Peace will not come from the big conferences. World peace has been broken even while the conferences were going on. Peace must come from the people."

"If any country can really take up the wheel," put in the interviewer, "it is India. Do you think it will?"

"I confess the process is very slow," replied Gandhiji. ". . . But everything is possible for God. If there is no living power called God, the spinning-wheel has no place."

"As a fairly intelligent human being and an American," the correspondent resumed, "I can only say that though many Americans

would call spinners cranks, there are not a few who are thinking hard. Something has to be found, that would save civilisation from destruction. Life must be simplified."

"Human personality cannot be sustained in any other way," replied Gandhiji. "All must have equal opportunity. Given the opportunity, every human being has the same possibility for spiritual growth. That is what the spinning-wheel symbolises."

"I propose to interpret the Charkha to Americans as a 'thinking machine'," Gandhiji's interviewer finally remarked. "I found while I was attending my spinning class that if I was alone with it, it made me think. If only Americans could get down to spin, they might be able to do some thinking for which otherwise they get no time. It might make them forget the atom bomb."

(7) Man is a symbol using animal. Symbols enable us to communicate what words cannot. They are the means by which "one stratum of the personality signals to another." In dreams, for instance, "the subconscious mind seems to be signalling to the conscious mind"⁵² by means of dream symbolism.

In ritual, the process is reversed. Ritual, i.e. action symbolising an idea, enables "the conscious mind and emotions to communicate with and act upon the subliminal." A familiar illustration of this is the institution of flag salutation to inculcate patriotism on the citizens, and of the military salute to inculcate on the soldiers the habit of discipline and unquestioning obedience. Both ritual and symbols help us toward "a more complete integration of different levels of our being."⁵³ They help to release the tremendous power embodied in the aspects of the Reality which they represent. A more elementary illustration of the use of outward symbols is when we use a moving target instead of a live object to give training in fire-arms. "You shoot at boards, then at targets, then at beasts. Then you are passed as an expert in the art of destruction."⁵⁴ The practice of violence can thus be taught to people by the help of outward symbols. Ritual and outward symbols have their use in the inculcation of Ahimsa too, but by themselves they are not enough. "The non-violent man has no outward weapon and, therefore, not only his speech but his action also seems ineffective. I may say all kinds of sweet words to you without meaning them. On the other hand, I may have real love in me and yet my outward expression may be forbidding. Then outwardly my action in both cases may be the same and yet the effect may be different. For the effect of our action is often more potent when it is not patently known. . . . It is, nevertheless, infinitely greater than the conscious effect."⁵⁵ To inculcate Ahimsa one has to go beyond speech, even beyond action, to what lies behind action—the significance of action in terms of identification with the universal essence, Ultimate Reality in which we are all united—

the source of all knowledge and of all power, the power that accrues to him who has merged himself with it. Knowledge is a function of being. But "the world is too much with us." We are as a result alienated from the truth which is within us. But, affirms Gandhiji, "we have lost the paradise only to regain it."⁵⁶ To regain it is man's prerogative and birth right. In an answer to Meno's question in Plato's *Dialogues* whether virtue is to be taught, Socrates answers that virtue is not taught. It is "recollected". Recollection is "a getting of one's self together, a retreat into one's soul."⁵⁷ To impart inwardness to the practice of non-violence, Gandhiji instituted individual and mass prayer and mass singing of God's name to the accompaniment of *tal* (see Vol. I, pages 162-63). "Muddy water let stand becomes clear," observed Laotze. "One discovers truth," said Gandhiji, "and the method of applying the only legitimate means of vindicating it, i.e. Satyagraha or soul force, by patient endeavour and silent prayer."⁵⁸ In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan "in the silence of the prayer we touch the deeper layers of being", where to each is "revealed the living presence of God. . . according to his capacity and need."⁵⁹

It was Gandhiji's claim that for over fifty years he had practised non-violence with "scientific precision" and he knew of not one single case in which it had failed. Where it seemed sometime to have failed, the failure was not that of the principle but of the experimenter, i.e. himself. "When I have become incapable of evil and when nothing harsh or haughty occupies, be it momentarily, my thought-world, then, and not till then, my non-violence will move all the hearts of all the world."⁶⁰

"But this kind of *sadhana* might take thousands of years," it was put to him. He did not agree. "It may take some a thousand years, and it may take some others only one year. Don't think that if in spite of my fifty years' practice of it I am still imperfect, it must take you many more years. No, there is no rule of three here. You may succeed quicker than I."⁶¹

Far from being discouraged, said Gandhiji, he saw in his imperfections, God's purpose at work for the advancement of Ahimsa. "My imperfections and failures are as much a blessing from God as my successes and my talents, and I lay them both at His feet. Why should He have chosen me, an imperfect instrument, for such a mighty experiment? I think He deliberately did so. He had to serve the poor dumb ignorant millions. A perfect man might have been their despair. When they found that one with their failings was marching on towards Ahimsa, they too had confidence in their own capacity. We should not have recognised a perfect man if he had come as our leader, and we might have driven him to a cave. Maybe he who follows me will be more perfect and you will be able to receive his message."⁶²

He had not a shadow of a doubt that "the world of tomorrow will be—must be a society based on non-violence."⁶³ "I belong to the tribe of Columbus and Stevenson," he grimly declared.⁶⁴ "If I have erred at all it has been in the company of the most distinguished scientists in all ages and all climes." What scientist worthy of the name ever complained of the ruthless accuracy and precision which the success of his experiments demanded, or allowed himself to be deterred by difficulties and failures? "Thousands like myself may die to vindicate the ideal but Ahimsa will never die and the gospel of Ahimsa can be spread only through believers dying for the cause."⁶⁵

5

It has been argued that the weapon of non-violence can be of avail only when the power opposing it is susceptible to moral appeal, but is of no use against totalitarian dictators—monsters in human form—who have made themselves impervious to world opinion and are incapable of pity or moral response of any kind. Would it not be playing into the hands of these dictators, it is asked, to confront them with non-violence, seeing that they are un-moral by definition?

In reply to this Gandhiji reiterates that non-violence does not depend for its working upon the sufferance or goodwill of the tyrant. It is self-sustained. "Belief in non-violence is based on the assumption that human nature in the essence is one and therefore unfailingly responds to the advances of love. . . . A non-violent resister depends upon the unfailing assistance of God which sustains him throughout difficulties which would otherwise be considered insurmountable. His faith makes him indomitable."⁶⁶

Non-violent resistance is much more active than violent resistance, maintained Gandhiji. "It is direct, ceaseless, but three-fourths invisible and only one-fourth visible. In its visibility, it seems to be ineffective . . . but it is really intensely active and most effective in ultimate result. . . . A violent man's activity is most visible, while it lasts. But it is always transitory. . . . Hitler . . . Mussolini . . . and Stalin . . . are able to show the immediate effectiveness of violence. But it will be as transitory as that of Chinghis' slaughter. But the effects of Buddha's non-violent action persist and are likely to grow with age. And the more it is practised, the more effective and inexhaustible it becomes, and ultimately the whole world stands agape and exclaims, 'a miracle has happened.' All miracles are due to the silent and effective working of invisible force. Non-violence is the most invisible and the most effective."⁶⁷

To take an instance from history, it was not lack of will or confidence in his capacity to annihilate that "dark, contemptible, superstitious heresy"—as Christianity was then known—that stayed Nero's

hand, when he started burning Christian heretics alive to illuminate the nocturnal garden sports of Rome, or throwing them to gladiators and hungry lions in the Colosseum to make a Roman holiday. Enlightened public opinion of his day was wholly against the new sect. To exterminate Christians like a pest was regarded as a laudable and meritorious act of public service. They were regarded as by nature corrupt and steeped in sedition; enemies of the State and of true religion. No anti-Jewish diatribe of Goebbels or Streicher could exceed in virulence or cold-blooded hatred the words put by Anatole France into the mouth of Pontius Pilate, which very correctly reflect the historical attitude of Roman proconsuls towards the early Christians.⁶⁸ Nor were the Christians sufficiently numerous or important to employ "embarrassment tactics" successfully. And their persecutors knew it. Had they actually decided upon their extermination, nothing could have prevented them from it. And yet they did not, because they could not.⁶⁹

So baffling, so subtle, so novel in character and contrary to all that they had so long recognised or were familiar with was this new force that in the face of it they did not know what to do. And before they were aware of it, it, like a hidden leaven, permeated and transformed the entire mass. The triumphant smile on the face of the Christian martyr, as he proceeded calmly to the stake to be burnt alive, at first surprised, then exasperated and finally undermined and overwhelmed the complaisance and smug self-confidence of the proud patrician. The javelin-proof coat-of-mail of the Roman cohorts was not proof against this subtle force. It insinuated itself secretly into the families of the high and mighty and finally gained a footing even in the Imperial household itself.

Coming to our times, overwhelming scientific testimony as to the superiority of the power of non-violence is furnished by that great savant Prince Kropotkin in his *Mutual Aid: As a Factor in Evolution*. He cites in corroboration the testimony of Charles Darwin that in wild nature, where there is not any curb or check upon the destructive propensities of the strong, the "fittest to survive are not the physically strongest nor the cunningest but those who learn to combine so as mutually to support each other." Species of birds "which have an almost ideal organisation for robbery," he shows "... decay, while other species ... which practise mutual help ... thrive." In the long run "the cunningest and the shrewdest are eliminated in favour of those who understand the advantages of social life and mutual support." Sociability proves to be the chief factor of evolution "both directly, by securing the well-being of the species while diminishing the waste of energy and indirectly, by favouring the growth of intelligence." Evolution of compassion as a necessary outcome of social life makes for a considerable

advance in general intelligence and sensibility. "It is . . . a powerful factor of further evolution."

The same is borne out by the observations of Konrad Z. Lorenz. That great naturalist has piled instance upon instance in his *King Solomon's Ring* to show how, even where the law of jungle prevails, it is the meek that inherit the earth. He takes that symbol of cruelty and voraciousness, the wolf. When an enormous old timber wolf and a rather weaker one engage in an uninhibited fight the one who is beaten offers unprotected to his enemy the bend of his neck, the most vulnerable part of his whole body! "Less than an inch from the tensed neck-muscle, where the jugular vein lies immediately beneath the skin, gleam the fangs of his antagonist from beneath the wickedly retracted lips. . . . Every second you expect violence and await with bated breath the moment when the winner's teeth will rip the jugular vein of the loser. But . . . the victor will definitely not close on his less fortunate rival. You can see that he would like to but he just cannot! A dog or wolf that offers its neck to its adversary in this way will never be bitten seriously."⁷⁰

Similarly in the case of turkeys: "If a turkey-cock has had more than his share of the wild and grotesque wrestling-match in which these birds indulge, he lays himself with outstretched neck upon the ground. Whereupon the victor behaves exactly as a wolf or dog in the same situation, that is to say, he evidently *wants* to peck and kick at the prostrated enemy, but simply cannot: he would if he could but he can't!"⁷¹

Whatever may be the reasons, the author comments, "that prevent the dominant individual from injuring the submissive one, whether he is prevented from doing so by a simple and purely mechanical reflex process or by a highly philosophical moral standard, is immaterial to the practical issue. The essential behaviour of the submissive as well as of the dominant partner remains the same: the humbled creature suddenly seems to lose his objections to being injured and removes all obstacles from the path of the killer, and it would seem that very removal of these outer obstacles raises an insurmountable inner obstruction in the central nervous system of the aggressor."⁷²

This "inner obstruction" to killing in the face of non-resistance is the device that nature has evolved for the survival of the species. Not the adoption of deadlier and deadlier armaments but the shedding of them is thus, it would seem, the law of survival.

In an interview with *New York Times* correspondent at a time when the democracies were faced with a crisis, Gandhiji suggested simultaneous disarmament on the part of the democratic powers as a solution. "I am as certain," he said, "as I am sitting here that this would open Hitler's eyes and disarm him." "Would not it be a miracle?" Gandhiji's interviewer asked. Gandhiji replied: "Perhaps.

But it would save the world from the butchery which seems impending." "The hardest metal yields to sufficient heat; even so must the hardest heart melt before the sufficiency of the heat of non-violence. And there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence to generate heat During my half-century of experience I have not yet come across a situation when I had to say that I was helpless, that I had no remedy in terms of non-violence."⁷³

Today when the choice before us is not between victory or defeat for one side or the other but between existence or non-existence of civilisation and perhaps of the human species itself, this wise, courageous and eminently practical counsel of one who had the rare gift of seeing into the heart of things before anyone else had even a suspicion of it, is worthy of the most prayerful consideration of those who are guiding the destinies of nations.

What about those thousands of Jews and others who perished in the incinerators and gas chambers of the Nazi Germany? it may be asked. What did their non-violence avail them? The answer to this question is perhaps a counter question: Did those who perished at the hands of the Nazis really practise true non-violence — the non-violence of the strong? Did the victims of Nazi tyranny, like the Christian martyrs of old, meet their doom with that smile on their face, that forgiveness, faith and love in their hearts, which it was, historians have testified, that planted in the hearts of the Roman Legionaries those obstinate questionings which ultimately undermined the foundation of the Roman Empire? Or, did they go down with an unuttered curse on their lips, and an impotent passion for revenge in their hearts? "Non-violence of the weak is bad. But the violence of the impotent—impotent violence—is worse."⁷⁴ This may sound harsh but the law is inexorable. When the hardening of the heart is the result of a long, accumulated sense of injustice, real or fancied, it calls for a commensurate volume of innocent suffering of the purest type to neutralise it. If, therefore, non-violence may, at times, not seem to work, it will only mean that more of it was needed and of greater purity.

Not even the worst criminal of history, Jung reminds us, need be regarded as beyond redemption. Even in the best of us "and just because it is the best, the seed of evil lies, and nothing is so bad but that some good could come of it."⁷⁵ It is a well-known phenomenon known to psychiatrists that "when a pendulum swings so violently in one direction, it is capable of reaching just as far on the opposite side. . . the minus-value is balanced by a plus-value."⁷⁶ We have St. Paul's celebrated saying, where sin is great, grace doth "much more abound." The same was reiterated by Gandhiji to his numerous audiences during his "repentance tour" in Bihar: "The greater the sinner, the greater the saint."

Our feeling of helplessness in the face of the challenge of brute force arises, Gandhiji said, from "our deliberate dismissal of God from our common affairs. . . . Our daily life is a negation of God."⁷⁷ "Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions, even as chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment of conditions of attainment thereof."⁷⁸ Dictators regard with contempt those who do not come to them with clean hands, who are not themselves free from the vices which they condemn in others, and who have not shed violence, exploitation and imperialism in every shape or form. They never had any experience of genuine Ahimsa. "They have up to now always found ready response to the violence that they have used. Within their experience, they have not come across organised non-violent resistance on an appreciable scale, if at all. Therefore, it is not only highly likely, but I hold it to be inevitable, that they would recognise the superiority of non-violent resistance over any display of violence that they may be capable of putting forth."⁷⁹

An elephant maddened by an excruciating toothache will viciously attack anyone who tries blunderingly to administer to him. But he will allow an experienced vet to operate on him and is grateful when he is cured. Abnormal psychopathic individuals—dictators, oppressors and the like are sick souls. In the words of Gerald Heard: "Physically fit, their psychological sickness grows and must grow. They need . . . any who can really 'minister to a mind diseased'. . . . They despise and destroy the pleasure-loving, comfort-seeking democracies and the vagrant and uncertain mystics and the passionate revolutionaries and even the gentle apostles of world-wide goodwill. But the service and assistance of one who knows more about the mind than they do, and who can save them from what the closest surveillance of their secret police cannot, their self-haunting nature in the darkness and loneliness of the night—such service and assistance they could crave."⁸⁰ Chenghis, he reminds us, "sent for a Taoist master and listened when the master rebuked him."⁸¹ And has not a Greek chronicler recorded how the Macedonian confessed that he had found in Dandamis, the Indian sage, "old and naked" though he was, "the only antagonist in whom he, the conqueror of many nations, had met more than his match"?⁸²

We have as yet barely touched the hem of the garment. Half a century "is nothing in discovering the hidden possibilities of this force and working them out," said Gandhiji.⁸³ "Modern science is replete with illustrations of the seemingly impossible having become possible within living memory. But the victories of physical science would be nothing against the victory of the Science of Life, which is summed up in Love which is the Law of our Being."⁸⁴ Ahimsa, he maintained, "is the strongest force known. We have not been able yet to discover

the true measure of the innumerable properties of an article of daily use like water. . . . Let us not, therefore, make light of a force of the subtlest kind like Ahimsa and let us try to discover its hidden power with patience and faith. . . . It is difficult to forecast the possibilities when men with unflinching faith carry this experiment further forward. . . . Our usual experience is that in most cases non-violence is the real antidote of violence, and it is safe to infer from it that the highest violence can be met by the highest non-violence.”⁸⁵

To the objection that the discipline which this calls for is perhaps too much to expect of human nature, he answers that no-one should dogmatise about the capacity of human nature for degradation or exaltation. “The usefulness of the non-violent method seems to be granted by all the critics (but) they gratuitously assume the impossibility of human nature, as it is constituted, responding to the strain involved in non-violent preparation. But that is begging the question. I say, ‘You have never tried the method on any scale. Insofar as it has been tried, it has shown promising results.’”⁸⁶

It must not be forgotten that the votary of Ahimsa has to bring to bear upon his quest the same qualities of faith, perseverance and single-mindedness, industry, resourcefulness and intelligence, as the dictator does to achieve power, if he hopes to be able to meet the challenge of brute force by the power of non-violence. “We have to live and move and have our being in Ahimsa, even as Hitler does in *himsa*. . . . Hitler is awake all the 24 hours of the day in perfecting his *sadhana*. He wins because he pays the price.”⁸⁷

Are the votaries of Ahimsa prepared similarly to pay the price? asks Gandhiji. Are their intellects unclouded and unerring? “A mere belief in Ahimsa . . . will not do. It should be intelligent and creative. If intellect plays a large part in the field of violence, I hold that it plays a larger part in the field of non-violence.”⁸⁸

6

A close study of natural and historical phenomena shows that when a particular tendency in nature, or society has reached its peak, it is, by a sudden mutational change, transformed into its opposite. For a while the two balance each other. The resultant then becomes the starting point of a new phase of development. “The road of Excess leads to the Palace of Wisdom,” wrote William Blake. Often things get worse before they become better. The increasing deadliness and use of destructive weapons far from being necessarily a pointer to the future may indeed be its reverse.

It is a curious phenomenon that during the second World War, though armaments had become deadlier, the actual casualties were

less than during the first. The totalitarian powers found that if they could demonstrate their undoubted capacity to exterminate the opponent, it was not necessary for their purpose to exterminate him. Round this discovery they built their philosophy of frightfulness which enabled them by diplomatic pressure alone sometimes to enslave whole populations without firing a shot. But no sooner was this discovery put into effect than its opposite came into the field. The oppressed people discovered that if they were prepared to die to the last man, in all probability they would not have to die. For what the tyrant desires is not total annihilation of the opponent but to bend him to his will. The moment, therefore, the people realise that there is something in them which is apart from the body and which armaments cannot destroy along with the perishable body, the power of armaments is sterilised. That is what happened in the end. By learning the art of dying without a sense of defeat, the oppressed people managed to live, while the oppressors rushed headlong to their doom. As the author of *The Moon is Down* put it, "The flies overcame the fly-paper."

Proceeding on this analogy, Gandhiji predicted that the advent of the atom bomb, which is the ultimate of brute force, would inevitably bring into the field its opposite, viz. soul-force or the power of the spirit. The day mankind learnt to pit it against the tyranny of brute force, the citadel of tyranny would fall and the atomic nightmare that today weighs upon humanity would roll away and vanish like the memory of an ugly dream: "Non-violence is . . . soul force or the power of godhead within us. Imperfect man cannot grasp the whole of that Essence . . . but even an infinitesimal fraction of it, when it becomes active within us can work wonders. . . . Non-violence is like radium in its action. An infinitesimal quantity of it imbedded in a malignant growth, acts continuously, silently, and ceaselessly till it has transformed the whole mass of the diseased tissue into a healthy one. . . . It is self-acting. The soul persists even after death, its existence does not depend on the physical body. . . . It transcends time and space. It follows, therefore, that if non-violence becomes successfully established in one place, its influence will spread everywhere."⁸⁹

Gandhiji postulated only two conditions for its success: (1) There must be recognition of the existence of the soul apart from the body, and its permanent nature, and "this recognition must amount to a living faith"; and (2) in the last resort "this technique does not avail those who do not possess a living faith in the God of Love."

It has again been argued that in these days of aerial warfare, the person who rains death from above does not even know who and how many have been killed. How can the method of moral conversion be used to affect him, seeing that there is no personal contact?

Gandhiji's reply to this is included in the foregoing. Non-violence is an all-pervasive force. It does not depend for its propagation upon a physical medium. It is self-sustained and self-acting. Besides, "a warrior lives upon his wars." The moment he finds that his armaments and warring talent are out of court, he is paralysed. Says Gandhiji: "Supposing a people make up their mind that they will never do the tyrant's will, nor retaliate with the tyrant's own methods, the tyrant will not find it worth his while to go on with his terrorism. If sufficient food is given to the tyrant, a time will come when he will have more than his surfeit. If all the mice in the world held conference together and resolved that they would no more fear the cat but all run into her mouth, the mice would live."⁹⁰ The cat plays with a mouse. She does not kill it outright but holds it between her jaws, then releases it, and again pounces upon it as soon as it has made an effort to escape. In the end, the mouse dies out of sheer fright. "The cat would have derived no sport if the mouse had not tried to run away."⁹¹

Has the emergence of atomic weapons made obsolete the weapon of non-violence? Gandhiji was once asked. Far from this being the case, he replied, non-violence was the only thing that was left in the field after that. "It is the only thing that the atom bomb cannot destroy." "I did not move a muscle," he went on to add, "when I first heard that an atom bomb had wiped out Hiroshima. On the contrary I said to myself, 'Unless now the world adopts non-violence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind'."

"How would you meet the atom bomb . . . with non-violence?" Margaret Bourke-White, the American correspondent asked Gandhiji on the 30th January, 1948, just a few hours before he was killed. He replied: "I will not go underground. I will not go into shelter. I will come out in the open and let the pilot see I have not a trace of ill-will against him. The pilot will not see our faces from his great height, I know. But the longing in our hearts—that he will not come to harm—would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened."

Then guessing probably what was passing in his interviewer's mind, he added: "If those thousands who were done to death in Hiroshima, if they had died with that prayerful action—died openly with that prayer in their hearts—their sacrifice would not have gone in vain."

This was no mere statement of personal faith or a mystical belief. He had again and again shown how an awakened soul armed with the power of non-violence could achieve what whole battalions of armed forces could not.

Nobody is expected to accept the solitary experience of another as decisive scientific proof. But Gandhiji maintained that his experience was capable of being repeated by anyone if all the conditions

were fulfilled. The practice of Ahimsa, therefore, had a scientific basis. "The *rishis*, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realised their uselessness and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence."⁹²

Gandhiji's programme of Satyagraha, observes Dr. Zimmer, "is a serious, very brave, and potentially vastly powerful modern experiment in the ancient Hindu science of transcending the sphere of lower powers by entering that of higher. . . . This is a battle waged on the colossal, modern scale, and according to principles derived from the textbooks, not of the Royal Military College, but of Brahman."⁹³

This statement needs to be slightly modified. The science of Brahman is by no means peculiarly or exclusively a "Hindu" science. "There is only one *sat*—Ultimate Reality—the learned name it variously," testified the ancient Vedic seer. Every religion has produced men of faith and realisation in all climes and ages who have attested to and demonstrated the matchless efficacy of the power of the spirit. Only in India an attempt was made to discover and formulate its science.

Gandhiji's contribution consisted in forging out of it a sanction for society for the solution of world problems "or rather the one supreme problem of war"⁹⁴ and bringing to bear on the investigation of its techniques patient experimental accuracy and the critical detachment of a modern scientist.

The present era will be associated by the future historian with two world-shaking events, viz. the discovery and release of atomic energy and the demonstration of the power of the *atman* to resist the power of armaments successfully. If one may use an analogy, Thoreau was to the science of *atman* its Bohr and Fermi, who first achieved atomic fission and the release of the energy locked up in the atom. Tolstoy may be compared to Einstein, who working through pure mathematics, discovered all by himself, and enunciated the existence of energy imprisoned in the atom, its potentialities and the possibility of its release. Gandhiji's role is analogous to that of the scientists who perfected techniques, for achieving controlled atomic chain reactions and harnessing the same to peaceful ends.

In a moment of rare illumination, Thoreau wrote: "Love. . . never ceases, it never slacks. Its power is incalculable; it can move the globe without a resting place. But though the wisest men in all ages have laboured to publish this force and every human heart is, sooner or later, more or less, made to feel it, yet how little is it actually applied to social needs. . . . True it (love) is the motive-power of all successful social machinery; but . . . as the mechanical forces have not yet been generously and largely applied to make the physical world answer to the ideal, so the power of love has been but meanly and sparingly

applied, as yet. . . . Still less are we accumulating its power, and preparing to act with greater energy at a future time. Shall we not contribute our share to this enterprise then?"⁹⁵

A couple of months before his death, Tolstoy in a letter to Gandhiji predicted that the non-violent work that he, Gandhiji, was engaged in in South Africa was the one in which the whole of the Christian and non-Christian world was bound one day to participate.

With a certitude characteristic of him Gandhiji affirmed: "We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of non-violence."⁹⁶

The weapon of non-violent resistance or soul force which Gandhiji has given to the world is thus the fruit and culmination of the researches of savants from all over the world. It is the common heritage of all the down-trodden and oppressed peoples of the earth in the battle of right against wrong, of freedom and justice against tyranny, of the spirit against the power of armaments, and if one might say so, their only hope.

We hear so much these days of international control and development of atomic energy. Cannot there be international cooperation for the development and use of this unique power about which Jung, that greatest of living psychologists, has testified: "Psychic life is a world power that exceeds by many times all the powers of the earth."⁹⁷

NOTES

TOWARDS NEW HORIZONS

- 1 Gina Lombroso, *The Tragedies of Progress*, New York, 1931 p. 250.
- 2 David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasants*, London, 1952, p. 229.
- 3 George R. Sargent in *The New Statesman and Nation*, January 5, 1952.
- 4 *Harijan*, January 28, 1939, p. 439.
- 5 *Young India*, March 17, 1927, p. 86.
- 6 *Young India*, April 23, 1931, p. 81.
- 7 *Harijan*, January 28, 1939, pp. 438-39.
- 8 David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasants*, London, 1952, p. 130.
- 9 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947, p. xiii.
- 10 Wilfred Wellock, *A Mechanistic or a Human Society?*, p. 14.
- 11 J. Kranjevic, *Peasant Movement in Eastern and Danubian Europe*, quoted in "Contemporary Review", August 1948.
- 12 David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasants*, London, 1952, p. 164.
- 13 G. T. Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 139.
- 14 It is appalling the amount of forest timber that goes into the making of newsprint alone. Only one Sunday edition of a daily paper like the *New York Times*, it has been calculated, requires "ten acres of big trees" to supply the necessary wood pulp for its paper. And newsprint is only one out of the many items of modern living that make demands on our forest wealth.
- 15 Dr. Mitrany quotes the following from Professor Y. U. Knornev: "The tractor plough is the enemy of grassland in dry areas, but is indispensable to the propagandist in the modernisation of Russian agriculture. Though forewarned by the experience of other countries, it is difficult to ascertain if the authorities are aware of the danger of mechanisation."
- 16 Jacks and Whyte, *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 37.
- 17 In May 1934, according to Jacks and Whyte, an estimated 300 million tons of Middle West soil were lifted by one storm and some of it "for the first time in history reached the Atlantic seaboard in sufficient quantity to darken the cities and choke their dwellers. 'It seemed as if the very desert had resolved to march on the Capital'." — *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 214.
- 18 *Ibid*, p. 26.
- 19 Edward Hyams in *The New Statesman and Nation*, December 8, 1951.

20 During the years 1920-25, over 520,000 tons of bones alone were exported from India, impoverishing the soil in respect of lime and phosphates to that extent. — Sir John Orr, quoted in Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 81.

21 According to McCarrison and Vishwanathan, the difference in nutritive value of grains grown on soil treated with cattle manure as compared with grains grown on soil treated with chemical manure amounted in millet to about 15 per cent. and in wheat to between 10 and 17 per cent. Wheat grown on soil treated with cattle manure contained more vitamin A than wheat grown on soil treated with complete chemical manure; millet grown on soil treated with cattle manure contained more vitamin B than millet grown on soil treated with complete chemical manure. One gramme of 'cattle manure wheat', when added to the basal diet used in these experiments as the sole additional source of vitamins A and B gave better growth in rats, than when these vitamins were provided by cod-liver oil and marmite; one gramme of 'chemical manure wheat' gave as good growth. — *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, 1926, p. 351.

22 Sir Albert Howard, Director of the Institute of Plant Industry, Indore (1924-31), as a result of his experiments on animal and plant breeding came to the conclusion that "1. Insects and fungi are not the real cause of plant disease, and only attack unsuitable varieties or crops improperly grown. Their true role in agriculture is that of censors for pointing out the crops which are imperfectly nourished. Disease resistance seems to be the natural reward of healthy and well-nourished protoplasm. The first step is to make the soil live by seeing that the supply of humus is maintained. 2. The policy of protecting crops from pests by means of sprays, powders and so forth is thoroughly unscientific and radically unsound; even when successful, this procedure merely preserves material hardly worth saving."

So bold did Sir Howard become, records Dr. Wrench in his *The Wheel of Health*, "in his assurance that by right soil-feeding he had overcome the danger of disease that he offered to import 'a supply of the various cotton boll-worms and boll-weevils from America, and the letting of these loose among my cultures. I am pretty certain that they would have found my cotton cultures very indifferent nourishment...at Indore during the seven years I was there; I cannot recall a single case of insect or fungous attack.' "

The same applied to animals which were fed on healthy plant life. "For twenty-one years (1910-1931)," Howard wrote in "The Role of Insects and Fungi in Agriculture" (*The Empire Cotton Growing Review*, Vol. xiii), "I was able to study the reaction of well-fed animals to epidemic diseases, such as rinderpest, foot-and-mouth disease, septicaemia, and so forth, which frequently devastated the countryside. None of my animals were segregated; none were inoculated; they frequently came in contact with diseased stock. No case of infectious disease occurred. The reward of well-nourished protoplasm was a very high degree of disease resistance, which might even be described as immunity."

23 Observes Lord Northbourne: "Milk must be pasteurised in order that it may be more safely bulked for handling by vast distributing concerns....It is true that...pasteurisation kills disease germs....(But) pasteurising admittedly alters one of the phosphatic

constituents of milk — indeed the alteration in question is used as one of the tests of efficient pasteurisation. That constituent is closely concerned in the calcium metabolism of the body, which includes among other things the formation of bones and teeth.... Purity is the advertiser's watchword. But in practice it has come to be almost synonymous with sterilisation. Sterilisation means killing, in order to remove the likelihood of unwanted change. It is the very opposite of freshness. The excellence of freshness consists in the existence of susceptibility to change.... It is practically certain that nothing which is chemically pure is of any use at all. Even chemically pure water is no good to drink. The subtleties which really count are all of the nature of impurities.... Hygiene is all very well, but it is no substitute for health." (*Look to the Land*, London, 1940, pp. 68-70). It is the same when wheat is ground and sifted into white flour and rice is polished.

24 Gilbert C. Wilson under "Hungry People with Full Stomachs" has the following: "We worked hard. We diligently kept our fields clean. We even raked and burned our cotton and corn-stalks so that they would not handicap the subsequent crop. The grass in our pasture was nice and tall and green, but the Devil seemed to be winning. Our cattle seemed to starve to death on a full stomach. They didn't actually lie down and die, but it seemed that as they would eat more and more, their bellies would get larger and larger, and they would get runtier and runtier from having to carry their bellies around.... We took all from our soil, adding nothing back. Our diligent tilling of the soil, with no cover crops, only hastened the dissipation of the organic matter and subsequently, the loss of essentially all minerals, as well as the sandy hillsides themselves. The loss of the organic matter caused the once loose and crumbly lowlands to convert to baked, cement-like glades.... I also know that my baby boy will be slowly starving if he eats food grown off my present poor East Texas farms." ("Chemurgic Uses for Old and New Crops", Chemurgic Papers, 1946 series, No. 5.)

25 Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, London, 1940, p. 83.

26 David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasants*, 1952, p. 128.

27 Chemurgic Papers, 1946 series, No. 5.

28 Griscom Morgan, *Vitality and Civilisation*, Chicago, 1947, p. 9.

29 Professor King, quoted in Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 81.

30 The biggest of the Dust Bowls in California has advanced by forty miles in one year while in the whole of the U.S.A. 15,000,000 acres of good land are being spoiled by erosion every year. In Africa, the Sahara is said to be moving southward at a mean rate of over half a mile a year, and the Turkana desert eastward at six or seven miles a year. The Northern Sahara was at one time reputed as the "granary of Rome". And it is believed that the Congo forest which is now separated from it by 1,500 miles of desert or semi-desert, "reached nearly to Khartoum". — Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, London, 1940, pp. 16-17.

31 General Smuts quoted in Jacks and Whyte, *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 21.

32 Jacks and Whyte, *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 39.

33 *Ibid*, p. 21.

34 *Ibid*, p. 19.

35 *Ibid*, p. 37.

36 Stuart Chase in his *Rich Land, Poor Land* described how a chasm 3,000 acres in extent and 200 feet deep in Georgia (U.S.A.) "started to grow forty years ago from water dripping unheeded off a barn roof and forming a little rill that became a rivulet that became a torrent.... Other chasms and gullies, tributaries of this ... cover 40,000 acres in the neighbourhood." In India, in Bardoli in Surat district, one finds narrow gorges from 8 to 20 feet deep enclosed by high clay walls that were formed by rain water running down the tracks left in the soil by cart-wheels.

37 Jacks and Whyte, *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 21.

38 Professor Shaler in the *National Geographic Magazine*, 1896.

39 Royal Commission on Agriculture, 1935, quoted in Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 94.

40 Jacks and Whyte, *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 26.

41 *Ibid*, p. 286.

42 Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, London, 1940, p. 80.

43 *Ibid*, p. 24.

44 Jacks and Whyte, *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 211.

45 Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, London, 1940, p. 25. The process is described by Northbourne thus: "Consider the case of an international loan made by country A to country B to enable B to 'develop'.... B must sell goods to A or to some other country to get the money with which to pay A.... A does not like this, because it undercuts her home prices. So she puts on tariffs and takes other steps to restrict imports. But countries C, D, E, F, etc. are in similar positions.... Now countries in B's position are *ex hypothesi* 'undeveloped'. They have areas of virgin or unoccupied land. By despoiling this land of its fertility they can produce food very cheaply. Those inhabitants of A who are the holders of B's bonds will welcome this because (1) they get their interest; (2) cheap food enables them to cut manufacturing costs; (3) the cry of cheap food is political jam for any one who sees a profit in the system. So B's land is ruined — and so is A's because of the cut prices of food; but nobody who matters seems to mind that much." (pp. 26-27)

46 Jacks and Whyte, *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 282.

47 G. T. Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 144.

48 Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, London, 1940, p. 129.

49 Jacks and Whyte, *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 203.

50 *Ibid*, p. 38.

51 Richard Gregg, *Which Way Lies Hope?*, Ahmedabad, 1952, p. 21.

52 Daniel Bell in *Encounter*, June 1954, p. 13.

53 H. J. Massingham in *The New Statesman and Nation*, December 29, 1951.

54 Edward Hyams in *The New Statesman and Nation*, December 8, 1951.

- 55 G. T. Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 144.
- 56 Jacks and Whyte, *The Rape of the Earth*, p. 297.
- 57 *Harijan*, August 29, 1936, p. 226.
- 58 *Harijan*, January 25, 1942, p. 16.
- 59 Albert Gleizes, *Life and Death of the Christian West*, London, 1947, p. 56.
- 60 Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 206.
- 61 R. Austin Freeman, *Social Decay and Regeneration*, London, 1921, p. 101.
- 62 Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 301.
- 63 *Ibid*, p. 306.
- 64 William Willcocks, *Ancient Irrigation System of Bengal*, University of Calcutta, 1930, p. 7.
- 65 *Ibid*, p. 110.
- 66 *Ibid*, p. 108.
- 67 *Ibid*, p. 127.
- 68 *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Fourth Edition, pp. 354-55.
- 69 *Harijan*, November 2, 1934, pp. 301-02.
- 70 Prayer speech, December 20, 1947.
- 71 Virgil Jordan quoted by Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 228.
- 72 *Ibid*, p. 224.
- 73 *Ibid*, p. 319.
- 74 Professor Sihle, quoted in Wrench, *The Wheel of Health*, London, 1938, p. 135.
- 75 Journal of the American Medical Association, quoted in Richard Gregg, *Which Way Lies Hope?*, Ahmedabad, 1952, p. 26.
- 76 The report of the Medical Statistics Division of the Office of the Surgeon General of the United States for 1946, quoted in Richard Gregg, *Which Way Lies Hope?*, Ahmedabad, 1952, p. 26.
- 77 Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 289.
- 78 *Ibid*, pp. 289-91.
- 79 R. Austin Freeman, *Social Decay and Regeneration*, London, 1921, p. 23.
- 80 Richard Gregg, *Which Way Lies Hope?*, 1952, p. 25.
- 81 Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 156.
- 82 Wrote Daniel Bell in *Encounter* of June 1954 : " If one hopes to provide a new spirit among workers and a new appetite for work, one needs to consider the worker as more than a part of a 'human relation' in a factory. His job must not only feed his body: it must sustain his spirit. One of the fascinating discoveries of an American sociological study, *The Men on the Assembly Line*, by Charles Walker and Robert Guest, is the way in which the men, resenting the mechanical harness to which they are hitched, sought to 'buck the line', in some small way to introduce variety and assert their own work rhythms.... 'One of the most striking findings of this study is the psychological importance of even minute changes in his immediate

job experience.' The implication of the Walker and Guest study are fairly simple. Since detailed job breakdown becomes socially (and humanly) self-defeating, the answer lies in job rotation, in job 'enlargement', in lengthening the work cycle, etc. Whatever the narrow losses this entails from the point of view of time-and-motion study, the gain in workers' satisfaction is beyond counting."

83 Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 265.

84 Herbert Read, *Education for Peace*, New York, 1949, p. 44.

85 *Ibid*, p. 45.

86 Writes Herbert Read: "I might as well confess at this point that I daily grow suspicious of what I can only call exhibitionist culture. Exhibitions of painting and sculpture, of French tapestries or Australasian totems; concerts of classical music, of modern music, of Chinese music; operas from Vienna or ballet from Russia — yes, it is all very entertaining, a little exhausting if we care to keep up with the accelerating pace of it all; and no doubt it does increase the curious collection of odd impressions, of disconnected facts and half-remembered names, which we keep in some corner of our cerebellum and call knowledge — and which we dig up from this cloudy and over-crowded receptacle when we want to display our 'culture'. But what does it all mean in the terms of the vital reality which is our daily behaviour and immediate happiness? Very little that I can see." — *Education for Peace*, New York, 1949, p. 46.

87 Stuart Chase has the following to say about the leisure: "In Middletown 'the leisure of virtually all women and of most of the men over thirty is mainly spent sitting down' — in motor car, at the movies, reading or listening to the radio. A few play...while the rest of us shout, clap hands, hurl pop bottles at the umpire, crush in our neighbours' hats, and get what thrill we may from passive rather than active participation. Our play comes to us, in these circumstances, at one remove from reality. When we watch a score board outside a newspaper office, it comes at two removes....Down the ages we have watched and listened at theatres, bull fights, concerts, but how small a part it has been of the total play activity. Today it is the larger part, and I suspect the ratio is increasing — despite the new golf players and the campers....It ought not to be hard to persuade our fellow citizens to have far more fun for far less money; but who, knowing the strength of the current commercial structure, has any hope of a successful campaign based on such obvious commonsense....In the midst of that unbelievable congestion and devastating racket, the entire nation on some bright morning might flee — cursing and praying for deliverance — into the mountains and the wilderness...provided there was any wilderness left to which to flee." — *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 259.

88 Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 256.

89 Herbert Read, *Education for Peace*, New York, 1949, p. 55.

90 Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 265.

91 Herbert Read, *Education for Peace*, New York, 1949, p. 48.

92 *Harijan*, January 18, 1942, p. 5.

93 Herbert Read, *Education for Peace*, New York, 1949, p. 48.

94 *Ibid*, p. 32.

95 Griscom Morgan, *Vitality and Civilisation*, Chicago, 1947, p. 4.

96 *Ibid.*

97 *Ibid*, p. 9.

98 Writes Jung: "The increasing industrialisation of the countryside, and the growing sense of insecurity, deprive men of many opportunities for giving vent to their affective energies. The peasant's alternating rhythm of work secures him unconscious satisfactions through its symbolical content — satisfactions which the factory workers and office employees do not know and can never enjoy. What do these know of his life with nature, of those grand moments when, as lord and fructifier of the earth, he drives his plough through the soil, and with a kingly gesture scatters the seed for the future harvest; of his rightful fear of the destructive power of the elements; of his joy in the fruitfulness of his wife who bears him the daughters and sons who mean increased working-power and prosperity? From all this we city-dwellers, we modern machine-minders, are far removed.... See how men slink to work, only observe the faces in trains at 7-30 in the morning! One man makes his little wheels go round, another writes things that interest him not at all. What wonder that nearly every man belongs to as many clubs as there are days in the week.... To these sources of discontent there is added a further and graver difficulty. Nature has armed defenceless and weaponless man with a vast store of energy, to enable him not only passively to endure the rigours of existence but also to overcome them. She has equipped her son for tremendous hardships. As a rule we are protected from the immediate threat of danger, and for that reason we are daily tempted to excess." — *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, London, 1953, pp. 56-57.

99 Griscom Morgan, *Vitality and Civilisation*, Chicago, 1947, p. 3.

100 *Ibid*, p. 13.

101 Stafford Cripps, *Democracy Upto Date*, London, 1939, p. 19.

102 *Ibid*, p. 21. Sir Stafford Cripps further observes: "Once, however, we acknowledge interference by the State as a necessity, Parliament finds itself involved in a whole field of the most complex activities with demands being made upon it for regulation and help from all sections and classes of people.... Once the State interfered with the individual conduct of trade and industry... it is progressively compelled to take a larger and larger share in the regulation of the whole industrial life of the country." (pp. 34-35)

103 Gerald Heard, *Pain, Sex and Time*, London, 1939, p. 236.

104 Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 322.

105 R. Austin Freeman, *Social Decay and Regeneration*, London, 1921, p. 34.

106 *Young India*, May 5, 1927, p. 142.

107 *Young India*, September 15, 1927, p. 313.

108 Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 300.

109 *Ibid*, p. 296.

110 Veblen quoted in Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines*, New York, 1929, p. 299.

- 111 Aldous Huxley, *Science, Liberty and Peace*, New York, 1946, p. 3.
- 112 Aldous Huxley, *Science, Liberty and Peace*, New York, 1946, p. 22.
- 113 *Young India*, February 13, 1930, p. 52.
- 114 *Young India*, January 29, 1925, p. 41.
- 115 Wilfred Wellock, *A Mechanistic or a Human Society*, p. 26.
- 116 *Harijan*, July 26, 1942, p. 238.
- 117 *Harijan*, July 28, 1946, p. 236.
- 118 *Ibid.*
- 119 *Ibid.*
- 120 *Ibid.*
- 121 *Ibid.*
- 122 Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, London, 1940, p. 185.
- 123 C. E. Murray quoted in *Community Service News*, March-April, 1948.
- 124 Albert Gleizes, *Life and Death of the Christian West*, London, 1947, p. 96.
- 125 *Harijan*, February 27, 1937, p. 18.
- 126 *Harijan*, June 22, 1935, p. 146.
- 127 *Harijan*, July 28, 1946, p. 236.
- 128 *Ibid.*
- 129 *Young India*, June 17, 1926, p. 218.
- 130 *Young India*, November 13, 1924, p. 378.
- 131 *Ibid.*
- 132 *Ibid.*
- 133 *Harijan*, August 29, 1936, p. 226.
- 134 *Young India*, November 13, 1924, p. 378.
- 135 *Harijan*, June 22, 1935, pp. 146-47.
- 136 *Ibid.*, p. 146.
- 137 *Young India*, November 13, 1924, p. 378.
- 138 *Harijan*, June 22, 1935, p. 146.
- 139 Gandhiji quoted by M. N. Chatterjee in *Community Service News*, September-October, 1946, p. 4.
- 140 *Harijan*, November 2, 1934, p. 303.
- 141 Aldous Huxley, *Science, Liberty and Peace*, New York, 1946, pp. 28-29.
- 142 *Harijan*, April 4, 1936, p. 63.
- 143 *Ibid.*
- 144 *Harijan*, February 27, 1937, p. 18.
- 145 *Harijan*, April 4, 1936, p. 64.
- 146 *Harijan*, October 9, 1937, p. 293.
- 147 To an American Press correspondent, who met him in London during the Round Table Conference, Gandhiji said: "You see that these nations (Europe and America) are able to exploit the so-called weaker or unorganised races of the world. Once these races gain an elementary knowledge and decide that they are no more

going to be exploited, they will simply be satisfied with what they can provide themselves. Mass production, then, at least where the vital necessities are concerned, will disappear." — *Harijan*, November 2, 1934, p. 301.

148 *Young India*, July 25, 1929, p. 244; and *Harijan*, November 16, 1934, p. 316.

149 *Young India*, November 12, 1931, p. 355.

150 *Young India*, December 20, 1928, p. 422.

151 *Harijan*, September 29, 1940, p. 299.

152 *Harijan*, November 4, 1939, p. 331.

153 *Harijan*, January 13, 1940, pp. 410-11.

154 *Harijan*, August 29, 1936, p. 226.

155 *Harijan*, September 1, 1940, p. 271.

156 *Ibid*, p. 272.

157 *Ibid*.

158 *Harijan*, January 13, 1940, p. 411.

159 *Young India*, March 26, 1931, pp. 46-47.

160 *Ibid*.

161 *Young India*, November 15, 1928, p. 381.

162 *Ibid*.

163 In reply to a question raised by some students, Gandhiji said: "What is the system of *Varnashram* but a means of harmonising the difference between high and low, as well as between capital and labour? All that comes from the West on this subject is tarred with the brush of violence. I object to it because I have seen the wreckage that lies at the end of this road.... Let us study our Eastern institutions in that spirit of scientific enquiry and we shall evolve a truer socialism and a truer communism than the world has yet dreamed of. It is surely wrong to presume that Western socialism or communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty." — *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, August 3, 1934, quoted in N. K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*, Ahmedabad, 1948, p. 93.

164 In his well-known study on the question of population *The Geography of Hunger*, Josue DeCastro has shown that over-population is not the cause of starvation, "starvation is the cause of over-population." According to him, people suffering from mal-nutrition show a definite increase in fertility due to "a complex process involving both physiological and psychological factors." The incidence of "improvement maternity" too, he found, is higher in the urban areas than in the rural. Gandhiji was, therefore, opposed to artificial methods of population control which suppress the consequence but leave the root of the evil untouched — nay prolong the evil by making endurable an otherwise unendurable state of things. The right remedy, he said, was to raise the nutritional and cultural level of the masses by providing them with healthy occupations amid agreeable rural surroundings which, besides giving them full employment all the year round, would have a high educative and cultural significance.

165 F. Baade quoted in Dr. Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasants*, London, 1952, p. 177.

166 *Ibid.*

167 *Ibid*, p. 128.

168 *Ibid.*

169 John Lossing Buck, referred to by Richard Gregg, *Which Way Lies Hope?*, Ahmedabad, 1957, pp. 136-37.

170 Richard Gregg, *Which Way Lies Hope?*, Ahmedabad, 1957, p. 137.

171 Professor King also reported the following: In the Shantung province in China they found a farmer, who was having 12 in his family. He kept one donkey, one cow, both exclusively labouring animals, and two pigs on 2.5 acres of cultivated land, where he grew wheat, millet, sweet potatoes and beans. "Here is a density of population equal to 3,072 people, 256 donkeys, 256 cattle and 512 swine per square mile. In another instance where the holding was one and two-thirds acres, the farmer had 10 in his family and was maintaining one donkey and one pig, giving to this farmland a maintenance capacity of 3,840 people, 384 donkeys and 384 pigs to the square mile, or 240 people, 24 donkeys and 24 pigs to one of our forty acre farms which our farmers regard too small for a single family." The average of seven Chinese holdings which King and his colleagues visited, and where they obtained similar data, indicated a maintenance capacity for those lands of 1,783 people, 212 cattle or donkeys and 399 swine — 1,995 consumers and 399 rough food transformers per square mile of farm land.

172 Gandhiji was very keenly alive to the need for a radical land reform. He felt it could be brought about by the application of his principle of "trusteeship" and of non-violent non-cooperation. But he had not worked out the precise manner in which the reform would be accomplished. This has since been done by Vinoba Bhave.

173 Chester Bowles, the former American Ambassador to India, in his *Ambassador's Report* (New York, 1954) observes: "The argument that small holdings of land in the hands of individual owners will mean less production is simply not valid. It confuses the *cost* of production per ton in America with the *amount* of production per acre. We have believed this myth because in the United States, where land is plentiful and labour is scarce and costly, we have found large-scale farming with giant machines highly profitable. But a Long Island farmer with two acres of good land, with plenty of fertilizer and intensive cultivation, could produce more wheat *per acre* than a North Dakota farmer with a tractor combine working a large farm." p. 175.

174 Elmer Pendell, *Population on the Loose*, referred to by Richard Gregg, *Which Way Lies Hope?*, Ahmedabad, 1957, pp. 136-37.

175 Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, London, 1940, pp. 77-78.

176 Prayer speech, December 13, 1947.

177 Metcalfe's Minute of November 7, 1830, quoted in Dutt, *Economic History of India*, 4th Edition, p. 346, and p. 386. In a passage that has become classical, Sir Charles Metcalfe, observed: "They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution...but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and

fortify themselves; a hostile army passes through the country; the village community collect their cattle within their walls and let the enemy pass unprovoked. If plunder and devastation be directed against themselves and the force employed be irresistible, they flee to friendly villages at a distance, but when the storm has passed over, they return and resume their occupations.... A generation may pass away, but the succeeding generation will return. The sons will take the place of their fathers, the same site for the village, the same position for the houses, the same lands will be reoccupied by the descendants of those who were driven out when the village was depopulated; and it is not a trifling matter that will drive them out, for they will often maintain their post through times of disturbance and convulsion, and acquire strength sufficient to resist pillage and oppression with success."

178 In its report the Indian Famine Committee of 1880, observed: "India has a poor law, but it is unwritten; it is owing to the profound sense which is felt by all classes of the religious duty of succouring, according to their means, the indigent and helpless who have claims on them as members of the family, the caste, or the town or village that in ordinary times no State measures of relief are needed." — Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 101.

179 Mildred Stroepe quoted by A. E. Morgan in *Community Service News*, May-June 1951, p. 80.

180 Sir William Sleeman in *Rambles and Recollections*, 1844, quoted in Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 106.

181 The Irrigation Committee's Report of 1901-1903, quoted in Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 105.

182 Strange though it may seem, it is nevertheless a fact that taking over charge of education by the British Government was actually followed by a decline in the percentage of literacy. The following by an eminent educationist appeared in *Young India* of December 29, 1920 and of January 19, 1921: "The village education was an essential part of the village administration and the provision for it was made in the village expenses.... There was in every village in the Punjab, a school of some sort, in which elementary education... was imparted either free of cost, or at a nominal rate of monthly fee. In addition to these schools, there were spread all over the Province 'colleges' of various grades and denominations in which the ancient ideals of the academies were kept alive and potent. There were centres of advanced study of metaphysics, astronomy, mathematics, grammar, philosophy and other sciences.... 'The indigenous village schools are a part of the village system and that they have formed a model to schools in England.' Again they (Court of Directors) point out 'this venerable and benevolent institution of the Hindus is represented to have withstood the shock of revolutions, and to its operation is ascribed the general intelligence of the natives.' There were 30,000 indigenous schools, and... a... number of colleges, giving instruction to about 4 lakhs scholars. In 1856, the Education Department was established.... One per cent village education Cess... was levied... for improving indigenous schools.... In 1860... the executive

management of the vernacular schools...(was) transferred to the Deputy Commissioner in charge of districts....The immediate effect of the transfer of vernacular schools from the management of the Officers of the Department to district officers was a *large reduction in the number of schools* and led to a considerable fluctuation in attendance. (Vide Education Report, 1862-63)...*The net result of this experiment* was that the number of schools fell from 2,171 in 1858-59 to 1,853 in 1859-60...and to 1,526 in 1881-82."

183 Sir F. S. Lely, writing his suggestion regarding "Better Government in India in 1906" with special reference to his own Province of Bombay, remarked on the Government's interference with the indigenous system as follows: "Our village sanitary requirements are a constant irritation. The truth is the habits of the people are more cleanly than those of corresponding Europeans, though following up the old, old mistake, we imagine they are not simple because they are different." Sir Lely believed that if powers had been given to the Panchayat, it would have brought in better sanitation on village lines. The linking up of the village watchman with the British official police aroused the wrath of an experienced administrator like Monroe. To absorb the watchman in a British modelled police, Monroe warned, would be fatal to any true police decency. — Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 103.

184 J. Rutaj, *Peasant International in Action*, quoted in Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasants*, London, 1952, p. 276.

185 Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, London, 1940, p. 122.

186 *Ibid*, p. 143.

187 Ronald Duncan, an Oxford Don, poet, dramatist and writer of distinction was an associate of Dick Sheppard, the English pacifist. He came to Sevagram to find an answer from Gandhiji to some of the questions arising out of his pacifist activities. Impressed by Gandhiji's view that the English people had to become "Little Englanders" and attain self-sufficiency in food before they could afford to be sincerely peace-loving, he engaged, on his return to England, in an experiment in community farming as a part of his pacifist striving. In his book *Journal of a Husbandman* (Faber and Faber Ltd., London), describing the experiment, he has shown how rural credit based on a currency that is not of the farmer's making puts the farming community at a disadvantage: "Talking about farming, one touches on numerous subjects and innumerable grumbles, one bumps into this difficulty and that snag but all the time one is talking about *credit*. It is the reason why the ditches are silted and the thatch rotten. It is the reason why, and no subsidy or poultice can remedy this sagging wastage which is dragging the English village into a galvanised improvisation. You cannot state the position more clearly than this: the Bank's rate of interest on loans is higher than the margin of profit which present prices allow to return to the land. It is an old sore.... The Banks can create credit by writing on paper. I cannot pay interest by writing on paper. If the Bank lent me seed I could pay them in wheat. They lend me paper. I must pay them in paper. Paper which they can make and I can't. And to pay them in their paper, I must sell my wheat to some merchant at his price. Soon the merchant will get the wheat, the Bank will get the field, and I shall sit on the gate holding a piece of paper." (p. 46)

188 Dr. Oswald Spengler in his *The Decline of the West*, quoted in Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 123.

189 G. T. Wrench, *The Restoration of the Peasantries*, London, 1939, p. 110.

190 *Ibid*, p. 124.

191 *Ibid*, p. 113.

192 Ronald Duncan in his book makes the following observations on these experiments of Gandhiji's: "It is absurd to see so much land as rich as this derelict because one has not the coins to till it. We are trying barter....And the more of this the better: better than selling our plough to get coins for his barley and he selling his barley to pay for our ploughing; for that way both the plough and the barley leave for London, out of this district....The Indian peasant is now trying to produce his own basic currency: after a century of tyranny, being tied by the feet and hair to Bombay rupee he has produced a note backed by his own hand-spun cotton cloth. Each district wants its own mill so that the wheat offal, the bran, shall stay where it grew. And each district needs its own Bank so that it can regulate its own credit according to its needs. Neither of which is likely to occur, for those who talk about International Stabilised Currency have the platform, believing that if a thing, a scheme, is *big* it is *better*. Perhaps sexual impotency lies at the bottom of this tendency in Western man to merge things or perhaps he is trying to lose himself under the blanket of them. As the next best thing to a note backed by a local product I have tried barter — and neighbouring farmers accept this. And the more the merrier. But the charges we have to meet outside our own circle show that farming by comparison to other trades is a very poor relation." — *Journal of a Husbandman*, Faber and Faber, London, p. 49.

193 *Harijan*, March 25, 1939, p. 65.

194 *Ibid*, p. 64.

195 Compare with this the following from Ronald Duncan's book: "It is interesting to compare a farmer's charges with a doctor's fees. For the doctor has recently sent me a bill for fifteen guineas on account of attending to a member of my family on three or four separate interviews of five or ten minutes' duration, putting in two or three stitches in two or three minutes. On his side there is the expenditure of an hour's work, and a few inches of horse hair — on our side sixteen hours' work, petrol, oil and a tree, plus an element of risk, always a factor with a circular saw. Now the standard reply to this discrepancy is that the doctor has to recoup for an expensive training. And this is no doubt true, but the farmer also has an expensive training and what is more the paraphernalia of his trade is constantly depreciating. His tractor wears and needs replacing but the doctor carries his trade in his head....It is quite plain that the base for this discrepancy is largely snobbery. The doctor's wife must have a maid but the farmer's wife must scrub the dishes." — *Journal of a Husbandman*, Faber and Faber, London, p. 50.

196 Gandhiji, *Hind Swaraj*, Ahmedabad, 1946, pp. 44-45.

197 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947, p. 42.

198 *Ibid*.

- 199 Gerald Heard, *Pain, Sex and Time*, London, 1939, p. 234.
- 200 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947, p. 54.
- 201 H. J. Massingham in his Foreword to Albert Gleizes, *Life and Death of the Christian West*, London, 1947, p. 8.
- 202 *Harijan*, June 29, 1935, p. 156.
- 203 H. S. Canby (ed.), *Works of Thoreau*, Boston, 1946, pp. 784-85.
- 204 *Harijan*, June 29, 1935, p. 156.
- 205 Gandhiji, *From Yeravda Mandir*, Ahmedabad, 1945, pp. 35-36.
- 206 *Harijan*, June 29, 1935, p. 156.
- 207 Gandhiji, *From Yeravda Mandir*, Ahmedabad, 1945, p. 36.
- 208 Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, London, 1913, pp. 295-96.
- 209 *Harijan*, November 4, 1939, p. 331.
- 210 *Young India*, January 14, 1932, p. 17.
- 211 Gandhiji's statement on the eve of San Francisco Conference, April, 1945.
- 212 *Ibid.*
- 213 *Harijan*, October 14, 1939, p. 301.
- 214 *Harijan*, February 11, 1939, p. 8.
- 215 *Harijan*, May 16, 1936, p. 109. In 1931 Gandhiji wrote: "Merely to refuse military service is not enough. To refuse to render military service when the particular time arrives is to do the thing after all the time for combating the evil is practically gone. Military service is only a symptom of the disease which is deeper. I suggest to you that those who are not on the register of military service are equally participating in the crime if they support the State otherwise.... Each man old or young takes part in the sin by contributing to the maintenance of the State by paying the taxes. That is why I said to myself during the war that, so long as I ate wheat supported by the army whilst I was doing everything short of being a soldier, it was best for me to enlist in the army and be shot; otherwise I should retire to the mountains and eat food grown by nature. Therefore all those who want to stop military service can do so by withdrawing all cooperation. Refusal of military service is much more superficial than non-cooperation with the whole system which supports the State." — *Young India*, December 31, 1931, p. 426.
- 216 *Harijan*, April 20, 1940, p. 96.
- 217 *Ibid.*
- 218 *Harijan*, February 10, 1940, p. 441.
- 219 *Harijan*, October 7, 1939, p. 293.
- 220 See Appendix A. (Vol. II).
- 221 *Young India*, December 31, 1931.
- 222 *Harijan*, April 13, 1940, p. 90.
- 223 *Harijan*, December 24, 1938, p. 395.
- 224 *Harijan*, June 22, 1940, p. 172.
- 225 *Harijan*, December 24, 1938, p. 394.
- 226 *Harijan*, January 28, 1939, p. 442.

- 227 *Harijan*, July 28, 1940, p. 227.
- 228 *Harijan*, September 8, 1940, p. 276.
- 229 *Ibid*.
- 230 *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1942-44*, Ahmedabad, 1945, p. 169.
- 231 *Harijan*, January 13, 1940, p. 411.
- 232 *Harijan*, October 15, 1938, p. 290.
- 233 *Harijan*, November 12, 1938, p. 328.
- 234 *Harijan*, April 15, 1939, p. 90.
- 235 *Harijan*, October 14, 1939, p. 305.
- 236 *Ibid*, p. 304.
- 237 Gandhiji quoted in Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, Bombay, 1944, p. 64.
- 238 *Harijan*, December 30, 1939, p. 391.
- 239 *Young India*, July 2, 1931, p. 161.
- 240 *Ibid*.
- 241 *Harijan*, October 14, 1939, p. 304.
- 242 *Harijan*, September 15, 1946, p. 312.
- 243 *Harijan*, February 24, 1946, p. 20.
- 244 *Harijan*, September 1, 1940, p. 268.
- 245 *Ibid*.
- 246 See Pyarelal, *A Pilgrimage for Peace*, Ahmedabad, 1950, p. 73.
- 247 *Harijan*, October 13, 1940, p. 319.
- 248 *Ibid*.
- 249 *Ibid*.
- 250 *Ibid*.
- 251 *Harijan*, September 1, 1940, p. 268.
- 252 *Harijan*, October 13, 1940, p. 318.
- 253 *Ibid*.
- 254 *Ibid*.
- 255 *Harijan*, April 7, 1946, p. 74.
- 256 *Harijan*, October 13, 1940, p. 318.
- 257 *Ibid*.
- 258 *Ibid*.
- 259 *Ibid*, pp. 318-19.
- 260 *Ibid*, p. 319.
- 261 *Harijan*, September 1, 1940, p. 268.
- 262 *Ibid*.
- 263 *Ibid*.
- 264 *Ibid*.
- 265 *Harijan*, October 13, 1940, p. 318.
- 266 *Ibid*.
- 267 *Ibid*.
- 268 *Ibid*.

- 269 *Ibid.*
- 270 Gandhiji quoted in Mirabehn, *Gleanings*, Ahmedabad, 1949, p. 16.
- 271 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 272 *Harijan*, September 1, 1940, p. 268.
- 273 *Ibid.*
- 274 *Harijan*, September 15, 1940, p. 285.
- 275 *Ibid.*
- 276 *Harijan*, October 13, 1940, p. 319.
- 277 *Ibid.*
- 278 *Ibid.*
- 279 *Harijan*, August 21, 1940, p. 215.
- 280 "The Paradise within the Reach of All Men without Labour, by Powers of Nature and Machinery. An address to all intelligent Men. In two Parts" by J. A. Etzler.
- 281 H. S. Canby (ed.), *The Works of Thoreau*, Boston, 1946, p. 788.
- 282 Speech delivered at the Y.M.C.A., Madras, on February 16, 1916, *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Fourth Edition, pp. 384-85.
- 283 *Harijan*, August 25, 1940, p. 260.
- 284 *Young India*, November 26, 1931, p. 368.
- 285 *Young India*, November 5, 1931, p. 334.
- 286 *Harijan*, March 16, 1947, p. 67.
- 287 Prayer speech, February 2, 1947.
- 288 *Ibid.*
- 289 *Harijan*, June 1, 1947, p. 172.
- 290 *Harijan*, March 31, 1946, p. 64.
- 291 The idea of a subsidiary occupation for the mill hands was first conceived by Gandhiji during the eventful twenty-three days' strike of the Ahmedabad mill hands in the year 1918. It occurred to him then that if the strike was to be successful the mill hands must have an occupation that would maintain them wholly or partly. They must not rely upon doles. During the strike many of them were employed on unskilled labour. Writing in *Harijan* of July 3, 1937, Gandhiji recalled: "It was then that I mooted my suggestion to teach mill hands a subsidiary occupation. But my suggestion remained a dead letter till the next strike came. A sort of a beginning was made then. But it was difficult to bring into being all of a sudden an effective organisation for teaching subsidiary occupations. An organised and systematic effort is now being made by the Labour Union (of Ahmedabad) in that direction. Mill hands are being taught to select occupations which they can practise in their leisure hours at home and which would give them substantial relief in times of unemployment. These are ginning, cleaning, carding and spinning of cotton, weaving, tailoring, soap and paper-making, type-setting etc.... The intelligence of the working man is cramped by his soulless, mechanical occupation, which leaves him little scope or chance to develop his mind.... Let him only be organised along right lines and have

his intelligence quickened, let him learn a variety of occupations, and he will be able to go about with his head erect and never be afraid of being without means of sustenance."

292 *Harijan*, July 3, 1937, p. 161.

293 *Modern Review*, October 1935, quoted in Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, Calcutta, 1947, pp. 203-4.

294 *Ibid*, p. 204.

295 *Ibid*, pp. 202-3.

296 *Ibid*, pp. 203-4.

297 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947, pp. xvii-xviii.

298 Gandhiji quoted in Mirabeen, *Gleanings*, Ahmedabad, 1949, p. 15.

299 Austin Freeman defines a political parasite as one for whom a 'job' is created and who "produces a destruction of wealth out of all proportion to his actual consumption. His salary may be no more than one or two thousand a year; and this modest sum represents his actual consumption. But to enable him to acquire this income, a huge and a costly machinery must be brought into existence; expensive premises must be provided, well sprinkled with telephones and furnished with costly fittings; deputies, assistants and a great staff of clerks must be appointed and various other expenses incurred. And then beyond all this destruction of wealth is the further destruction which results from his activities; the interference with the normal activities of individuals throughout the country, the disturbance of normal social adjustments and the enormous waste of time." — *Social Decay and Regeneration*, London, 1921, p. 214.

300 B. Atkinson (ed.) *Walden and Other Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, New York, 1937, p. 659.

301 *Harijan*, August 4, 1940, p. 235.

302 *Ibid*.

303 *Ibid*.

304 *Ibid*.

305 Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, London, 1940, p. 189.

SETTING DEMOCRACY ON THE MARCH

1 "On the Pont au Change, on the Place de Greve, in long sheds, Mercier, in these summer evenings, saw working men at their repast. One's allotment of daily bread has sunk to an ounce and a half....At these frugal tables, the cook's gridiron hissing near by, and the pot simmering on a fire between two stones, I have seen them ranged by the hundred; consuming, without bread, their scant messes, far too moderate for the keenness of their appetite, and the extent of their stomach." — Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, Vol. II, p. 425.

2 *Ibid*, p. 414.

3 *Ibid*, p. 404.

4 *Ibid*, p. 416.

5 Gandhiji to Pandit Nehru, July 17, 1947.

- 6 Gandhiji to Pandit Nehru, July 28, 1947.
- 7 Gandhiji to Lord Mountbatten, July 28, 1947.
- 8 Pandit Nehru to Gandhiji, July 28, 1947.
- 9 Lord Mountbatten in a letter to Pyarelal.
- 10 *Harijan*, August 24, 1947, p. 289.
- 11 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947, p. 53.
- 12 *Young India*, August 6, 1925, p. 276.
- 13 *Harijan*, November 2, 1947, p. 392.
- 14 *Young India*, September 10, 1931, p. 255.
- 15 Aldous Huxley, *Science, Liberty and Peace*, New York, 1946, pp. 32-33.
- 16 Khrushchev's speech in the Supreme Soviet, November, 1957.
- 17 Aldous Huxley, *Science, Liberty and Peace*, New York, 1946, p. 33.
- 18 *Harijan*, January 9, 1937,, p. 383.
- 19 R. K. Prabhu (ed.), *India of My Dreams*, Bombay, 1947, p. 25.
- 20 *Young India*, April 17, 1924, p. 130.
- 21 *Young India*, June 24, 1926, p. 226.
- 22 *Young India*, October 6, 1921, p. 314.
- 23 *Young India*, June 24, 1926, p. 226.
- 24 *Young India*, April 17, 1924, p. 130.
- 25 *Harijan*, May 16, 1936, p. 112.
- 26 *Harijan*, August 17, 1947, p. 280.
- 27 Nor was this experience typical of India alone. Elsewhere too the habit of dependence on the State has had the effect of delaying unnecessarily the solution of the people's problems. Referring to housing shortage in England, after the first World War, Austin Freeman wrote: "What would our own ancestors have done? Would they have gone houseless while the raw material of the builder lay all around them? And while the 'State' filled tons of stationery with 'Proposals for a Housing Scheme'? Assuredly they would not. If they could not have made their own brick, then timber or cob or wattle and daub or boulder and clay or whatever their neighbourhood afforded would have been used. They would no more have dreamed of asking 'the State' to build their houses than to comb their hair. But the modern man, accustomed to rely upon great organisations for the supply of all his needs, and quite unfamiliar with the idea of self-help, when the industrial organisation breaks down, turns helplessly to the State; regardless of the fact that this agency which he calls on to house him shows so little capability of housing itself that it was still to be seen eighteen months after the cessation of war, squatting like some monstrous cuckoo in hotels, picture-galleries and other buildings created by individual enterprise and taken forcibly from their rightful owners." — *Social Decay and Regeneration*, London, 1921, pp. 172-73.
- 28 *Harijan*, November 23, 1947, p. 419.
- 29 Prayer speech, January 26, 1948.

- 30 *Harijan*, April 2, 1938, p. 65.
 31 *Harijan*, November 2, 1947, p. 389.
 32 Prayer speech, November 6, 1947.
 33 *Harijan*, November 2, 1947, p. 389.
 34 Prayer speech, November 3, 1947.
 35 Prayer speech, October 17, 1947.
 36 *Ibid.*
 37 Prayer speech, November 3, 1947.
 38 Prayer speech, October 17, 1947.
 39 *Ibid.*
 40 Prayer speech, December 8, 1947.
 41 *Ibid.*
 42 Prayer speech, January 5, 1948.
 43 *Ibid.*
 44 Prayer speech, December 19, 1947.
 45 The prices of food-stuffs per maund stood as follows:

	Before decontrol	First week of Jan.	Middle of Jan.
Wheat	35 — 50	18 — 20	9
Rice	30 — 45	25	20
Maize	30 — 32	15 — 17	
Gram	38 — 40	16 — 18	
Moong	35 — 38	26	20

- 46 Prayer speech, January 5, 1948.
 47 Prayer speech, December 28, 1947.
 48 *Harijan*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.
 49 Prayer speech, December 8, 1947.
 50 *Harijan*, January 18, 1948, p. 516.
 51 *Harijan*, May 18, 1940, p. 129.
 52 *Ibid.*
 53 *Harijan*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.
 54 *Harijan*, May 18, 1940, p. 129.
 55 This has been attempted for the West by Richard Gregg in his *Pacifist Programme, In Time of War, Threatened War or Fascism*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet No. 5.
 56 *Young India*, January 9, 1930, p. 13.
 57 *Ibid.*
 58 *Harijan*, January 28, 1939, p. 443.
 59 *Harijan*, August 18, 1940, p. 253.
 60 *Harijan*, March 30, 1940, p. 70.
 61 *Harijan*, November 18, 1939, p. 344.
 62 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947, p. xv.
 63 *Ibid*, pp. xv-xvi.
 64 *Ibid.*
 65 *Ibid*, pp. xvi-xvii.

- 66 *Young India*, July 2, 1931, p. 162.
- 67 *Young India*, November 1, 1928, p. 363.
- 68 Mahadev Desai, *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*, Madras, 1928, p. 93.
- 69 *Young India*, July 2, 1931, p. 162.
- 70 Gandhiji's speech before the Gujarat Political Conference, *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Fourth Edition, p. 408.
- 71 Gandhiji, *Ethical Religion*, Madras, 1922, pp. 39-40.
- 72 *Harijan*, September 29, 1946, p. 333.
- 73 *Young India*, July 2, 1931, p. 162.
- 74 *Ibid.*
- 75 *Harijan*, September 15, 1946, p. 309.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 *Harijan*, April 13, 1940, p. 90.
- 78 *Harijan*, September 15, 1946, p. 309.
- 79 *Ibid.*
- 80 *Harijan*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.
- 81 *Harijan*, February 11, 1939, p. 8.
- 82 *Young India*, January 12, 1928, p. 12.
- 83 *Harijan*, July 21, 1940, p. 211.
- 84 *Harijan*, August 25, 1940, pp. 261-62.
- 85 *Harijan*, September 1, 1940, p. 263.
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 *Harijan*, August 25, 1940, p. 262.
- 89 *Harijan*, November 4, 1939, p. 332.
- 90 *Harijan*, July 21, 1940, p. 209.
- 91 *Harijan*, February 1, 1948, p. 4.
- 92 *Harijan*, October 14, 1939, p. 304.
- 93 *Harijan*, October 12, 1935, p. 276.
- 94 *Young India*, August 11, 1920, p. 4.
- 95 *Young India*, May 20, 1926, p. 184.

EPILOGUE

- 1 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947,
p. 90.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 *Harijan*, December 24, 1938, p. 394.
- 4 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947,
p. 17.
- 5 Vivekananda quoted in Romain Rolland, *Prophets of the
New India*, New York, 1930, p. 526.
- 6 *Ibid*, p. 526.
- 7 *Ibid*, p. 641.
- 8 *Young India*, March 10, 1920, p. 3.
- 9 *Young India*, September 23, 1926, p. 332.
- 10 *Young India*, November 10, 1921, p. 362.
- 11 *Harijan*, October 6, 1946, p. 342.
- 12 Gandhiji, *From Yeravda Mandir*, Ahmedabad, 1935,
pp. 68-70.
- 13 *Young India*, September 23, 1926, p. 332.
- 14 *Harijan*, April 2, 1938, p. 65.
- 15 H. G. Wells quoted in Van Teslar, *An Outline of Psycho-
analysis*, New York, 1925, p. xii.
- 16 Gerald Heard, *The Eternal Gospel*, New York, 1946, p. 221.
- 17 *Harijan*, March 14, 1936, p. 39.
- 18 *Harijan*, September 26, 1936, p. 260.
- 19 *Young India*, October 1, 1931, p. 287.
- 20 *Harijan*, May 14, 1938, p. 114.
- 21 N. K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*, Ahmedabad, 1948, p. 8.
- 22 *Harijan*, September 8, 1940, p. 275.
- 23 *Young India*, December 31, 1931, p. 428.
- 24 *Young India*, December 4, 1924, p. 398.
- 25 *Young India*, February 10, 1927, p. 44.
- 26 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947,
p. 82.
- 27 *Ibid*, p. 85.
- 28 Gerald Heard, *Pain, Sex and Time*, London, 1939, p. 298.
- 29 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947,
p. xiv.
- 30 Gerald Heard, *Pain, Sex and Time*, London, 1939, p. 6.
- 31 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947,
p. 82.
- 32 *Harijan*, September 24, 1938, p. 266.
- 33 *Harijan*, February 22, 1942, p. 48.
- 34 *Harijan*, May 1, 1937, p. 93.
- 35 *Young India*, September 23, 1926, p. 332.

- 36 *Harijan*, February 22, 1942, p. 48.
- 37 *Young India*, September 23, 1926, p. 332.
- 38 *Harijan*, November 4, 1939, p. 332.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 Gandhiji quoted in Mirabeen, *Gleanings*, Ahmedabad, 1949, p. 14.
- 41 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947, p. 17.
- 42 *Harijan*, July 21, 1940, p. 214.
- 43 Buddha's followers were not to engage in forbidden occupations, such as traders in weapons, butchers, publicans and poison sellers. They were forbidden from becoming soldiers.
- 44 *Harijan*, September 8, 1940, p. 277.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Harijan*, April 7, 1946, p. 74.
- 49 *Harijan*, March 20, 1937, p. 42.
- 50 *Harijan*, July 21, 1940, p. 210.
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 Richard Gregg, *A Compass for Civilization*, Ahmedabad, 1956, p. 168.
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 *Harijan*, March 20, 1937, p. 42.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 *Young India*, July 2, 1925, p. 232.
- 57 S. Radhakrishnan, *Bhagawat Gita*, p. 194.
- 58 *Young India*, June 1, 1921, p. 174.
- 59 S. Radhakrishnan, *Bhagawat Gita*, p. 194.
- 60 *Young India*, July 2, 1925, p. 232.
- 61 *Harijan*, July 21, 1940, p. 210.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p. 211.
- 63 Gandhiji quoted in Catlin, *In the Path of Mahatma Gandhi*, London, 1948, p. 322.
- 64 *Harijan*, June 15, 1940, p. 161.
- 65 *Harijan*, May 1946, p. 140.
- 66 *Harijan*, December 24, 1938, pp. 394-95.
- 67 *Harijan*, March 20, 1937, pp. 41-42.
- 68 "Since we cannot govern them, we shall be driven to destroy them. Never doubt it. Always in a state of insubordination, brewing rebellion in their inflammatory minds, they will one day burst forth upon us with a fury beside which the wrath of the Numidians and the mutterings of the Parthians are mere child's play. They are secretly nourishing preposterous hopes and madly pre-meditating our ruin. How can it be otherwise, when, on the strength of an oracle, they are living in expectation of the coming of a Prince of their own blood whose kingdom shall extend over the whole of the earth?"

There are no half measures with such a people. They must be exterminated. Jerusalem must be laid waste to the very foundation. Perchance, old as I am, it may be granted me to behold the day when her walls shall fall and the flames shall envelop her houses, when her inhabitants shall pass under the edge of the sword, when salt shall be strewn on the place where once the temple stood. And in that day, I shall at length be justified." — Anatole France, *Procurator of Judaea*.

69 "And you yourself Pontius, have seen perish beneath the cudgels of your legionaries simple-minded men who have died for a cause they believed to be just without revealing their names. Such men do not deserve our contempt. I am saying this because it is desirable in all things to preserve moderation and an even mind. But I own that I never experienced any lively sympathy for the Jews." — Anatole France, *Procurator of Judaea*.

70 Konrad Z. Lorenz, *King Solomon's Ring*, 1955, pp. 186-87.

71 *Ibid*, p. 194.

72 *Ibid*, pp. 195-96.

73 Gandhiji quoted in Radhakrishnan, *Great Indians*, Bombay, 1956, p. 42.

74 *Harijan*, July 28, 1940, p. 227.

75 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947, p. 75.

76 *Ibid*, p. 89.

77 *Young India*, May 25, 1921, p. 165.

78 *Harijan*, May 16, 1936, p. 109.

79 *Harijan*, December 24, 1938, pp. 394-95.

80 Gerald Heard, *Pain, Sex and Time*, London, 1939, p. 258.

81 *Ibid*.

82 See Pyarelal, *Pilgrimage for Peace*, Ahmedabad, 1950, pp. 157-60.

83 *Harijan*, August 11, 1940, p. 241.

84 *Harijan*, September 26, 1936, p. 260.

85 *Harijan*, July 28, 1940, p. 219.

86 *Harijan*, July 21, 1940, p. 213.

87 *Ibid*, p. 210.

88 *Ibid*.

89 *Harijan*, November 12, 1938, pp. 326-27.

90 *Harijan*, December 24, 1938, pp. 394-95.

91 *Ibid*.

92 *Young India*, August 11, 1920, p. 3.

93 Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, London, 1951, p. 172.

94 *Harijan*, September 24, 1938, p. 266.

95 H. S. Canby (ed.), *The Works of Thoreau*, Boston, 1946, pp. 788-89.

96 *Harijan*, August 25, 1940, p. 260.

97 C. G. Jung, *Essays on Contemporary Events*, London, 1947, p. 82.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ARMED INVASION AND NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

1

CAN INDIA BE DEFENDED?

The following appeared in the American magazine Liberty of August, 1940, under the caption "Can India be Defended?" by Mahatma Gandhi. It was splashed as "New weapon against the invader. A famous leader presents an amazing plan. (Reading time 6 minutes 5 seconds)." Whether it was actually written by Gandhiji in that form is more than can be vouched for. Harijan was not coming out at that time. And I was behind the prison bars as a "no-war" civil resister. But the ideas so vividly set forth in it are authentic enough as will be seen from Gandhiji's replies to Mirabeau's questions two years later (see page 190).

In recent months the German armies have swallowed vast new stretches of territory with a lightning speed. France has fallen and has been ruthlessly divided by the terms of the armistice. For the first time in more than a hundred years, England faces an enemy across the narrow waters of the Channel, and faces that enemy alone. The morrow, perhaps, will bring invasion by water and by air, and the very heart of the vast Empire may go down in bloody defeat.

But of course it is impossible to foretell the events of tomorrow, just as it was impossible to foretell the events of the past several months. One thing is clear: that new situations and urgent new problems are arising for all lands that in the past have been bound to Britain. These problems will weigh more heavily on India, perhaps, than on any other country. India, therefore, must consider most seriously indeed the possibilities contained in the immediate future.

There are three at least that stand out. One is that England will win. The next is that England and Germany will fight each other to a standstill, and that a peace of sheer exhaustion will be signed, leaving the Empire completely or virtually untouched. And the third possibility is that England will be defeated, and that her conquerors will set to work to break up the Empire.

As the richest and, in terms of profitable exploitation, most desirable part of the British Empire, India must give consideration to this third possibility.

Would India defend herself against the conqueror? And — more pertinently, perhaps — could India defend herself?

But first let me say this. The theoretical point has been raised that a third nation might help India to win her independence from Great Britain — say Germany or Russia. Would India accept that help?

No. We must find ourselves through our own inner strength; otherwise we must fall. Any structure built with outside help must of necessity be weak. India must win her future alone, and stand alone.

That has a direct bearing on the questions I have raised about India's inclination and ability to defend herself. For these questions are not of necessity related only to the outcome of the present war. The questions would apply just as much, if, say, there had been no war and if England had granted India full and complete independence. For India might then be just as liable to aggression as if she were seized as a part of a defeated British Empire.

I can best answer the question of India's ability to defend herself by referring to a letter I received recently from America. My correspondent asks: "Suppose a free India adopts Satyagraha (civil disobedience) and non-violence as an instrument of national policy, how would she defend herself against probable aggression by another State? What kind of resistance could and would be offered the invader? What would India's actions be to meet the invading army at the frontier? Or would she withhold all action until after the invader had taken over the whole country?"

My answers, obviously, can be only speculative. There is a very big "if" involved — that India would adopt civil disobedience and non-violence as her national policy. But let us suppose that such is the case. Let us suppose that there is no Indian army, no defensive fortifications, no rifles, cannons, shells, airplanes, tanks. And let us suppose that India stands entirely by herself and that the vast and powerful armies of a modern edition of Nero descend upon her. What would happen?

India would defend herself in this way.

The representatives of the free Indian State would let the invader in without opposition. But they would tell the invader and all his forces at the frontier that the Indian people would refuse to cooperate in any work in any undertaking. They would refuse to obey orders despite all threats and despite all punishments inflicted upon them.

That is civil disobedience. That is India's defence.

You may fancy that the hardened and ruthless invader would laugh at such measures. If he had conquered armies who opposed him with steel and cannons and warplanes, surely it would be ridiculously easy for him to conquer this unarmed army! But India is a land of millions, and if they stand idle the whole country stands idle. Nothing can be done with it; it is worthless. Civil disobedience, the invader would soon find, is a very powerful weapon indeed.

And there is another measure of defence that India could adopt. Trained in the art of non-violent resistance, the Indian people would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannons. They would tell the invader that they preferred death to submission. These brave words have been spoken in other lands; in India they would be spoken with all their true meaning, and spoken in the one great overwhelming voice of the masses. By the million, India's people would offer their breasts to the invader's bullets. And this

would be a terrifying spectacle — and one of the highest moral stature, ennobling those who took part in it.

The underlying belief in this philosophy of defence is that even a modern Nero is not devoid of a heart. The spectacle — never seen before by him or his soldiers — of endless rows of men and women simply dying, without violent protest, must ultimately affect him. If it does not affect Nero himself, it will affect his soldiery. Men can slaughter one another for years in the heat of battle, for them it seems to be a case of kill or be killed. But if there is no danger of being killed yourself by those you slay, you cannot go on killing defenceless and unprotesting people endlessly. You must put down your gun in self-disgust.

Thus in the end the invader must be beaten — by new weapons, peaceful weapons, the weapons of civil disobedience and non-violent resistance.

Practically speaking, there would be probably no greater loss in life than if forcible resistance were offered to the invader. How many men have been killed in Holland, Belgium, and France? Hundreds of thousands? Would the invading armies have shot down hundreds of thousands of men in cold blood if they had simply stood passively before them? I do not think so.

I have drawn no impossible picture. History is replete with instances of individual non-violent resistance of the type I have mentioned. The history of the Christian religion abounds in examples of men and women who have laid down their lives without murmur and without forcible resistance as martyrs for their faith. The histories of all religions offer similar examples.

There is no warrant for saying or thinking that a group of men and women cannot act as one in offering non-violent resistance. Indeed, the sum total of the experience of mankind is that men somehow or other live on. From which fact I infer that it is the law of love that basically rules mankind. For if hatred were the basic law, would not the human race have perished to the last man ages ago?

Yes — if India adopts the path of non-violence, she can defend herself, and she can win!

2

MIRABEHN'S LETTER TO GANDHIJI AND GANDHIJI'S REPLY

Mirabehn to Gandhiji

We may take it that the Japanese will land somewhere along the Orissa coast. Probably there will be no bombing or firing at the time of landing, as there are no defence measures on the coast. From the coast they will advance rapidly across the flat dry rice fields, where the only obstructions are rivers and ditches, now mostly dry and nowhere unfordable. As far as we are able to make out there will be no serious attempt to hold the Japanese advance until the hilly and wooded regions of the Orissa States are reached. The army of defence, whatever it is, is reported to be hidden in the jungle of these parts. It is likely to make a desperate attempt to defend the

Jamshedpur road, but the chances of its being successful must be very small. That means we may expect a battle to be fought in the north west of Orissa, after which the Japanese army will pass on into Bihar. At that time the Japanese are not likely to be broadly distributed over the country, but concentrated on their lines of communication between the sea and their advancing army. The British administration will have previously disappeared from the scene.

The problem before us is, in the event of these things happening, how are we to act?

The Japanese armies will rush over the fields and through the villages, not as avowed enemies of the population, but as chasers and destroyers of the British and American war effort. The population in its turn, is vague in its feelings. The strongest feeling is fear and distrust of the British, which is growing day by day on account of the treatment they are receiving. Anything that is not British is therefore something welcome. Here is a funny example. The villagers in some parts say — "Oh, the aeroplanes that make a great noise are British, but there are silent planes also, and they are Mahatma's planes." I think the only thing possible for these simple innocent people to learn is the attitude of neutrality, for it is, in reality, the only position that can be made logical to them. The British not only leave them to their fate without even instructing them in self-protection from bombing etc. but they issue such orders as will, if obeyed, kill them before the day of battle comes. How then can they be ready enthusiastically to obstruct the Japanese who are chasing this detested Raj, especially when the Japanese are saying, "It is not you we have come to fight." But I have found the villagers ready to take up the position of neutrality. That is to say, they would leave the Japanese to pass over their fields and villages, and try as far as possible not to come in contact with them. They would hide their food-stuffs and money, and decline to serve the Japanese. But even that much resistance would be difficult to obtain in some parts, the dislike of the British Raj being so great, that anything anti-British will be welcomed with open arms. I feel we have got to try and gauge the maximum resistance which the average inhabitants may be expected to put up, and maintain and make that our definite stand. A steady, long sustained stand, though not cent per cent. resistance, will be more effective in the long run than a stiff stand, which quickly breaks.

This maximum sustainable stand which we may expect from the average people is probably:

- 1 To resist firmly, and mostly non-violently, the commandeering by the Japanese of any land, houses, or movable property.
- 2 To render no forced labour to the Japanese.
- 3 Not to take up any sort of administrative service under the Japanese. (This may be hard to control in connection with some types of city people, Government opportunists and Indians brought in from other parts.)
- 4 To buy nothing from the Japanese.

5 To refuse their currency and any effort on their part at setting up a Raj. (Lack of workers and lack of time make it very hard, but we have to strive to stem the tide.)

Now as to certain difficulties and questions which arise:

1 The Japanese may offer to pay for labour, food and materials in British currency notes. Should the people refuse to sell for good prices or work for a good wage? For long sustained resistance over many months it may be difficult to prevent this. So long as they refuse to buy or take "service", the exploitation danger is kept off.

2 What should be done about the rebuilding of bridges, canals etc. which the British will have blown up? We shall also need the bridges and canals. Should we therefore set our hands to their rebuilding, even if it means working side by side with the Japanese, or should we retire on the approach of Japanese bridge builders?

3 If Indian soldiers, who were taken prisoners in Singapore and Burma, land with the Japanese invading army, what should be our attitude towards them? Should we treat them with the same aloofness as we are to show the Japanese or should we not try to win them over to our way of thinking?

4 After the exodus (before the approaching Japanese) of the British Raj, what shall we do about currency?

5 After battles have been fought and the Japanese armies will have advanced, the battle-field will be left strewn with the dead and wounded. I think we must unhesitatingly work side by side with the Japanese in burning and burying the dead and picking up and serving the wounded. The Japanese are likely to attend to the lightly wounded of their own men and take prisoners the lightly wounded of their enemy, but the rest would probably be left, and it will be our sacred duty to attend to them. For this we are from now planning the training of volunteers under the guidance of local doctors. Their services can also be used in case of internal disturbances, epidemics etc.

6 Besides the dead and wounded on the battle-field, a certain amount of rifles, revolvers and other small arms are likely to be left lying about unpicked up by the Japanese. If we do not make a point of collecting these things they are likely to fall into the hands of robbers, thieves, and other bad characters; who always come down like hawks to loot a battle-field. In an unarmed country like India this would lead to much trouble. In the event of our collecting such arms and ammunition, what should we do with them? My instinct is to take them out to sea and drop them in the ocean. Please tell us what you advise.

Gandhiji to Mirabehn

I have your very complete and illuminating letter....I...come straight to your questions which are all good and relevant.

1 I think we must tell the people what they should do. They will act according to their capacity. If we begin to judge their capacity and give directions accordingly our directions will be halting and even compromising which we should never do. You will therefore read my instructions in that light. Remember that our attitude is that

of complete non-cooperation with the Japanese army, therefore we may not help them in any way, nor may we profit by any dealings with them. Therefore we cannot sell anything to them. If the people are not able to face the Japanese army, they will do as armed soldiers do, i.e. retire when they are overwhelmed. And if they do so, the question of having any dealings with the Japanese does not and should not arise. If, however, the people have not the courage to resist the Japanese unto death and the courage and capacity to evacuate the portion invaded by the Japanese, they will do the best they can in the light of instructions. One thing they should never do — to yield willing submission to the Japanese. That will be a cowardly act, and unworthy of a freedom-loving people. They must not escape from one fire only to fall into another and probably more terrible. Their attitude therefore must always be of resistance to the Japanese. No question, therefore, arises of accepting British currency notes or Japanese coins. They will handle nothing from Japanese hands. So far as dealings with our own people are concerned they will either resort to barter or make use of such British currency as they have, in the hope that the National Government that may take the place of British Government will take up from the people all the British currency in accordance with its capacity.

2 Question about cooperation in bridge building is covered by the above. There can be no question of this cooperation.

3 If Indian soldiers come in contact with our people, we must fraternise with them if they are well-disposed, and invite them, if they can, to join the nation. Probably they have been brought under promise that they will deliver the country from foreign yoke. There will be no foreign yoke and they will be expected to befriend people and obey National Government that might have been set up in place of British Government. If the British have retired in an orderly manner, leaving things in Indian hands, the whole thing can work splendidly and it might even be made difficult for the Japanese to settle down in India or any part of it in peace, because they will have to deal with a population which will be sullen and resistant. It is difficult to say what can happen. It is enough if people are trained to cultivate the power of resistance, no matter which power is operating — the Japanese or the British.

4 Covered by (1) above.

5 The occasion may not come, but if it does, cooperation will be permissible and even necessary.

6 Your answer about the arms found on the wayside is most tempting and perfectly logical. It may be followed but I would not rule out the idea of worthy people finding them and storing them in a safe place if they can. If it is impossible to store them and keep them from mischievous people yours is an ideal plan.

APPENDIX B

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

Though split into two, India having attained political Independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e. as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. The struggle for the ascendancy of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal bodies. For these and other similar reasons, the A.I.C.C. resolves to disband the existing Congress organisation and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh under the following rules with power to alter them as occasion may demand.

Every Panchayat of five adult men or women being villagers or village-minded shall form a unit.

Two such contiguous Panchayats shall form a working party under a leader elected from among themselves.

When there are one hundred such Panchayats, the fifty first grade leaders shall elect from among themselves a second grade leader and so on, the first grade leaders meanwhile working under the second grade leader. Parallel groups of two hundred Panchayats shall continue to be formed till they cover the whole of India, each succeeding group of Panchayats electing second grade leader after the manner of the first. All second grade leaders shall serve jointly for the whole of India and severally for their respective areas. The second grade leaders may elect, whenever they deem necessary, from among themselves a chief who will, during pleasure, regulate and command all the groups.

(As the final formation of Provinces or districts is still in a state of flux, no attempt has been made to divide this group of servants into Provincial or District Councils and jurisdiction over the whole of India has been vested in the group or groups that may have been formed at any given time. It should be noted that this body of servants derive their authority or power from service ungrudgingly and wisely done to their master, the whole of India.)

1 Every worker shall be a habitual wearer of Khadi made from self-spun yarn or certified by the A.I.S.A. and must be a teetotaler. If a Hindu he must have abjured untouchability in any shape or form in his own person or in his family and must be a believer in the ideal of inter-communal unity, equal respect and regard for all religions and equality of opportunity and status for all irrespective of race, creed or sex.

2 He shall come in personal contact with every villager within his jurisdiction.

3 He shall enrol and train workers from amongst the villagers and keep a register of all these.

4 He shall keep a record of his work from day to day.

5 He shall organise the villages so as to make them self-contained and self-supporting through their agriculture and handicrafts.

6 He shall educate the village folk in sanitation and hygiene and take all measures for prevention of ill health and disease among them.

7 He shall organise the education of the village folk from birth to death along the lines of Nai Talim, in accordance with the policy laid down by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

8 He shall see that those whose names are missing on the statutory voters' roll are duly entered therein.

9 He shall encourage those who have not yet acquired the legal qualification, to acquire it for getting the right of franchise.

10 For the above purposes and others to be added from time to time, he shall train and fit himself in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sangh for the due performance of duty.

The Sangh shall affiliate the following autonomous bodies :

- 1 All-India Spinners' Association.
- 2 All-India Village Industries Association.
- 3 Hindustani Talimi Sangh.
- 4 Harijan Sevak Sangh.
- 5 Go-seva Sangh.

FINANCE

The Sangh shall raise finances for the fulfilment of its mission from among the villagers and others, special stress being laid on collection of poor man's pice.

New Delhi, 29-1-'48

M. K. Gandhi

APPENDIX C

GANDHIJI'S PICTURE OF IDEAL SOCIETY

Limning of Utopias was not in Gandhiji's line. His was a realistic mind. But his advice to a Province that might have the self-confidence, the strength, and the will to declare independence of the British Power and take its destiny in its own hands, made that discussion relevant.¹ From Dharampur (Noakhali) onwards, Gandhiji's prayer meetings were turned into an open forum where everybody was free to ask any question he liked and discuss the picture of independence that was to be realised in the free Provinces so as to serve as a model for the rest of India. What emerged was a picture of the India of his dreams — a picture of a casteless and classless society, in which there are no vertical divisions but only horizontal; no high, no low; all service has equal status and carries equal wages; those who have more use their advantage not for themselves but as a trust to serve others who have less; the motivating factor in the choice of vocations is not personal advancement but self-expression and self-realisation through the service of society.

Since all service here ranks the same and carries equal wages, hereditary skills are conserved and developed from generation to generation instead of being sacrificed to the lure of personal gain. The principle of community service replaces unrestricted, soulless competition. Everybody is a toiler with ample leisure, opportunity, and facilities for education and culture. It is a fascinating world of cottage crafts and intensive, small-scale farming cooperatives, a world in which there is no room for communalism or caste. Finally, it is the world of Swadeshi in which the economic frontiers are drawn closer but the bounds of individual freedom are enlarged to the maximum limit; everybody is responsible for his immediate environment and all are responsible for society. Rights and duties are regulated by the principle of interdependence, and reciprocity; there is no conflict between the part and the whole; no danger of nationalism becoming narrow, selfish or aggressive or internationalism becoming an abstraction where the concrete is lost in a nebulous haze of vague generalities.

“In free Provinces, would only those have voting right who have contributed by manual-labour to the service of the State?”

“My reply is an emphatic yes. All adults above a certain age, male or female, who would contribute some body-labour to the State, would be entitled to the vote. Thus, a simple labourer would become a voter without any difficulty, whereas a millionaire, a lawyer or a merchant would be hard put to it, unless he voluntarily converted himself into a labourer and contributed some socially useful body-labour to the State.”

“Would you insist even on a Rabindranath or a great saint like Raman Maharshi earning his bread by manual labour? Why should not a brain-worker be considered as being on a par with manual workers since both perform useful and necessary social work?”

1. See *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase*, Vol. I, pages 533-35.

“Intellectual work has certainly its importance and an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But I have insisted on bread-labour for all. No-one can claim to be exempt from that obligation. I hold with Tolstoy that manual work far from being inimical to intellectual activity improves its quality. I dare say that in ancient times Brahmins worked with their body as with their mind. But even if they did not, in the present age body-labour is a proved necessity.”

* * *

Towards the close of his itinerary Gandhiji took up the question : What should be the vocational organisation of society? Vocational organisation of society, held Gandhiji, may be vertical and competitive, or horizontal and cooperative. Under the former, remuneration is according to the importance attached to a particular calling and on the basis of the law of supply and demand; in the latter all occupations are placed on an equal footing, all are paid equal wages by society. Under it a person will choose an occupation, not because of the personal prospects it offers, but because he has a special skill or aptitude for it. And since skills and aptitudes generally follow the line of heredity more or less, the average person in the normal course would, if there were no inequalities of remuneration to lure him away from it, tend to follow the occupation he is born in. Profit-motive or wage-motive would give place to service-motive. Choice of vocation would be with a view to subserve the good of the community instead of personal advancement or the interest of one's family.

Would that mean that one would be debarred from changing his hereditary occupation, if he felt a special urge?

“No,” said Gandhiji, “not so long as one does not depend on it for one's living.” Such cases will naturally be few. Thus Buddha was a ruling prince, Socrates a sculptor, St. Paul a tent-maker. Yet Buddha became the Enlightened One, teacher of mankind; Socrates the prince of philosophers and St. Paul an apostle. But none of them regarded their calling as a means of livelihood. On the contrary, they relinquished the occupations they were born in to set an example of utmost renunciation. If society followed that principle, philosophers and artists would all labour with their hands for their living. All artists would be craftsmen and craftsmen artists, and life a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

The division of society into four main *varnas* or divisions according to birth, thus, represents a notional division only. It does not lay down a rigid or unalterable law to be imposed by authority; it only takes note of a tendency arising out of the operation of a natural law, viz., the law of heredity and environment. The notional four divisions can be modified, added to, or reduced to suit modern conditions. Today the system has fallen into desuetude and there is a promiscuity of *varnas*. Therefore, said Gandhiji, society must start *de novo*, all converting themselves voluntarily into *atishudras*, the lowest of the low, as he had himself done, by taking to scavenging as a universal duty and adopting the law of equal wages and equal status for all kinds of labour, physical and intellectual. The disturbing factor of inequality of wages and social status in respect of different kinds of service being eliminated, the natural tendency embodying the law of heredity and environment

would assert itself and the true occupational organisation of society based on service motive and the urge of self-expression and self-realisation would slowly re-emerge. Whether the "caste system" was a degenerated form of *varna* system as it existed in a prehistoric era or whether *varna* organisation was a purified and idealised form of the "caste system", Gandhiji claimed that for India there was no easier or more practical or shorter way than this to realise the ideal of a non-competitive, classless, egalitarian society without going through the travail of a class-war. The two fundamental principles on which it is based are that "there are no high and low, and everyone is entitled to a living wage, the living wage being the same for all." The alternative is unrestricted and predatory individualism on the one hand and a totalitarian regimentation of society in regard to the life-activities and even thinking of the people on the other, as is being witnessed today in some parts of the world.

* * *

It was put to Gandhiji that Government were introducing schemes of industrialising the country for the maximum utilisation of the country's natural resources and raw materials instead of its abundant man-power which was being allowed to run to waste. Could this be called rational development in the true sense?

It was obvious, Gandhiji replied, that any plan which exploited raw materials of the country and neglected the potentially more powerful man-power would never bring about human equality or make the nation really happy and prosperous. In the West they had neglected the universal man-power and concentrated power in the hands of the few who rose to power and fortune at the expense of the many. The result was that their industrialisation had become a doubtful boon to the poor in those countries and a menace to the rest of the world. If India was to escape such a disaster, she had to adopt and assimilate what was best in Western countries and leave aside their attractive looking but destructive economic policies. So far as India was concerned, real planning should consist in the best utilisation of the whole of her man-power and distribution of her raw products to her numerous villages for being manufactured into goods instead of being sent out of the villages or exported from the country to be repurchased as finished articles at a high premium.

Gandhiji put last touches to his picture of the ideal society by explaining the true meaning and implications of Swadeshi — perhaps the least studied and most misunderstood of all aspects of his philosophy.

Gandhiji defined Swadeshi as "that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote." In other words it means a recognition of the special duty and obligation that one owes towards one's immediate environment. Thus "a votary of Swadeshi will carefully study his environment, and try to help his neighbours" as his first charge. He would not allow himself to be "lured by the distant scene and run to the ends of the earth for service", throwing his own little world of neighbours and dependents out of gear, and more probably than not disturbing the atmosphere in the new place by his "gratuitous knight-errantry."

Swadeshi does not build a Chinese wall round itself. It only recognises the fact that "all living beings are members one of another...a person's every act has a beneficial or harmful influence on the whole world....The influence of a single act...may be negligible. But that influence is there all the same, and an awareness of this truth should make us realise our responsibility." Only he who has performed his duty to his neighbour, said Gandhiji, has the right to say "all are akin to me." A person who pretends to serve the whole world while neglecting his neighbour really serves neither the world nor his neighbour but only his own pleasure or whim. This means that everyone must serve according to one's capacity. In the case of one person his capacity may be exhausted in discharging his duty towards his neighbour, the capacity of the other man may require him to regard the whole world as his neighbour. This will not be a breach of the Swadeshi principle.

The principle of Swadeshi is capable of application to every walk of life. Thus, in religion it requires one to stick to the religion one is born in and help it grow into perfection by incorporating into it the excellences of all religions. This would make for constant growth and expansion of one's own religion and toleration of religions other than one's own. In economics, it would mean that one should make use of the services of a workman who is one's neighbour and help him to acquire skill if he is unskilled rather than import a more competent workman at a cheaper rate from outside and leave this poor fellow to starve. Swadeshi thus constitutes the basis and foundation of the Sarvodaya ideal, the ideal of "universal good" or the "upliftment of all"—even "unto this last". Similarly, Swadeshi precludes the use of cheap mass produced imported goods, e.g. foreign cloth, and letting millions of one's own countrymen engaged in various indigenous crafts be ruined. Politically, Swadeshi stands for the decentralisation of power, i.e., regional freedom and autonomy so that every regional unit may rise to the full height of its stature by developing institutions suited to its peculiar tradition and genius.

This is not a cult of exclusiveness or narrow parochialism. As one thinker has put it, each individual or unit has to strike the "universal concrete in terms of the milieu of its own cultural heritage. Only by proceeding from wherever we are — geographically, spiritually or emotionally — can we make the integral effort needed for the progress and peace of the whole of humanity." The reformer who bases his internationalism on Swadeshi thus "belongs to the whole human family but uses the language of associations to which he had been born, and which he transforms by inner transcendence."

"Could a man discriminate in favour of his immediate neighbours to the exclusion of others and yet identify himself with the whole of humanity?"

Gandhiji answered that one could serve the whole of humanity through service of one's neighbours, the condition being that the service of the neighbours was in no way selfish and did not involve the exploitation of any other human being. The neighbours would then understand the spirit in which service was rendered and they would give their services to their neighbours in turn. "If individual sacrifice is a living sacrifice, it will grow snowballwise, gathering

strength and momentum in geometrical progression till it encircles the whole earth."

"In free India whose interest shall be supreme? If a neighbouring State is in want, would India adopt an attitude of isolationism, saying that her own needs must come first?"

"A truly independent and free India would rush to the help of her neighbours in distress. A man whose spirit of sacrifice does not go beyond his own community, himself becomes, and makes his community, selfish. The logical sequel of self-sacrifice is that the individual sacrifices himself for the community, the community for the district, the district for the Province, the Province for the nation, and the nation for the world. A drop torn from the ocean perishes without doing any good. As a part of the ocean, it shares the glory of carrying on its bosom whole fleets of mighty ships."

The picture of Gandhiji's ideal society is thus more or less a modern version of the *varnashram* system which was propounded in ancient India and which in its essentials is today being reincarnated in the materialistic garb of a "casteless, classless and Stateless Society" based on socialised occupations with the slogan "To each according to his need, from each according to his capacity" and "All for each and each for all". There is, however, one fundamental difference between the two, which precludes their being described in common terms. In the philosophy of *varnashram*, individual activity is not a means of realising an earthly paradise of material satisfactions either for ourselves or for others but a means of transcending our strangulated, ego-centred consciousness by selfless service of others, and realising our true nature from which we have become alienated. In other words, it regards the goal of life's activity to be the realisation of our essential oneness with the entire creation, and beyond that with the transcendental, universal spirit — the Supreme Reality — which informs all creation and in which the whole creation lives, moves and has its being. The Marxist classless society makes of the physical body and its needs exclusively its god and is driven by the logical implications of its philosophy to the use of violence and abandonment of scruples for the achievement of its goal. The conflict between the means and the ends which is thus set up renders it self-contradictory as a philosophy, and self-defeating as a technique, of action. Gandhiji's philosophy on the other hand, in its ultimate sense, makes the individual "in his striving to identify himself with the entire creation" seek to be "emancipated from the bondage of the physical body" and rules out all means save truth and non-violence for the realisation of the goal of individual freedom, equality and brotherhood; in other words, the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth.

Gandhiji gave to his ideal society the name *Rama-rajya*. "Let no one commit the mistake of thinking," he explained addressing a big gathering at Haimchar, that "*Rama-rajya* means a rule of the Hindus. My Rama is another name for Khuda or God. I want *Khudai Raj*, which is the same thing as the Kingdom of God on Earth." The rule of the first four Caliphs was "somewhat comparable" to it. "The establishment of such a Rajya would not only mean welfare of the whole of the Indian people but of the whole world." — (From *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase*, Vol. I, pages 539-549.)

APPENDIX D

GANDHIJI'S VIEWS ON SOCIALISM & MARXISM

Gandhiji was a firm believer in a classless, egalitarian society in which there would be no distinctions of rich and poor, high and low. In some respects he went further even than the orthodox Socialists in as much as he would not exempt anyone from obligatory socially useful body-labour. "If a man work not neither shall he eat." He further held that all work—whether physical or intellectual—should carry equal remuneration. But he refused to accept the doctrinaire Socialist approach to current problems. Nor did he believe that society could be retailored by merely "dreaming of systems so perfect that no-one will need to be good". On the contrary he most firmly held that the only way to abolish privilege was to renounce it oneself. His Socialism was derived from his practice of the principle of "Unto this last". The orthodox Socialists questioned his claim but he maintained that he was a better Socialist than they. He had practised Socialism all his life by identifying himself with the poorest and lowliest and lost, and sharing with them their handicaps whereas those who called themselves Socialists were content to dream and prate about Socialism, while continuing to live in their old, easy way till "all were converted".

"The ideal of Socialism is not a new discovery," Gandhiji once remarked to one of his companions during his stay in Bihar. "It is to be found in the Gita. It means that we may not own anything beyond our strict requirement but should share equally with all God's creatures the means of subsistence. No big organisation is needed for the realisation of this ideal. Any individual can set about to practise it, beginning with himself. The first thing is to keep no more than what is strictly needed. To have a personal bank account would thus be incompatible with this ideal. Strict, ceaseless watch over one's own life is the first essential. Even a single individual if he enforces this ideal fully in his own person, can leaven the whole society. To become a trustee in the true sense of one's own wealth and talent is true Socialism. But today Socialism has come to mean taking forcible possession of other people's possessions. This is a travesty of true Socialism."

A group of fifteen students came to see Gandhiji some time after. He was at the moment observing his Monday silence. They called themselves Socialists. Gandhiji wrote out replies to their questions on slips of paper. The first step towards Socialism, he scribbled, was to shed sloth and aversion to physical labour. "Now tell me how many of you have servants in your homes?" he asked. They admitted that altogether there was at least one servant in each home. "And you call yourselves Socialists while you make others slave for you!" Gandhiji asked them. "It is a queer kind of Socialism which, I must say, I cannot understand. If you will listen to me, I will say, do not involve yourselves in any ism. Study every ism. Ponder and assimilate what you have read and try to practise yourself what appeals to you out of it. But for heaven's sake, do not set out to establish any ism. The first step in the practice of Socialism

is to learn to use your hands and feet. It is the only sure way to eradicate violence and exploitation from society. We have no right to talk of Socialism so long as there is hunger and unemployment and the distinction between high and low amongst us and around us."

He then sketched out for them a basic course in practical Socialism: (1) fold your bedding on getting up in the morning, (2) give a helping hand in preparing and laying out the breakfast, (3) help in dusting and cleaning up the house, (4) wash your own clothes, (5) help your mothers and sisters in cleaning and scrubbing utensils, (6) spin daily to provide yourself with the clothes you need, (7) keep your books and papers neat and tidy, and (8) use a two-anna steel nib in preference to a fifty-rupee-worth fountain-pen.

If they practised Socialism in this way, instead of talking or preaching to others, he concluded, they would create a Socialist society in their immediate neighbourhood, with themselves as the first converts. "You will not then need to 'convert' anyone to Socialism; your example will do that and, what is more, it will provide a welcome relief to your long suffering parents. You would cease to be a burden on them."

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Gandhiji had a soft corner in his heart for the Congress Socialists. Their programme of establishing a classless society appealed to him very much. He was afraid, however, they were setting about it the wrong way. The first step towards it, in the altered circumstances of the country, was for all to strive to achieve communal and national unity and together work for the good of the whole country. Circumstances had changed and their methods should change with the circumstances. It would not do to stick to their old, obsolete and hackneyed methods of sabotage, class-war and obstructionism which they had followed under British rule.

He warned them that independence by itself would not bring to India a new heaven and a new earth. It would only remove some of the handicaps under which they had previously laboured and thus clear the way for real constructive effort. A group of them came to see him at Delhi on the 27th May, 1947, on the eve of the announcement of the Partition Plan. He told them that if they were serious about establishing a Socialist order, the straightest and quickest way was to settle in the villages among the poor village folk, live as they did, labour with them eight hours a day, use village products only, eradicate illiteracy and untouchability, help the women to raise their own status. "If you are unmarried and want to marry, choose a village girl as your partner." If they did all that with sincerity and honesty of purpose, the leaven of their example would permeate the mass. The same applied to Congressmen also. The Socialists, however, must not forget, he went on to say, that with all its shortcomings the Congress was the one organisation that was truly national. It had not identified itself with any party or group. He was sure if the Socialists drew up a plan of village uplift—not merely a paper plan but one to be worked out—the Congress Government would back them and Pandit Nehru himself would sing their praises. What he found, however, was that they concerned

themselves mainly with promoting strikes, when the challenge of communalism stared them in the face and demanded their full attention. Political strikes were all right in the fight against the British but they were quite out of place when directed against their own countrymen. If they wanted to contest power with those who were at the helm, they must give proof of their superior talent, greater self-sacrifice and greater service. On no account must they accentuate existing tensions or create fresh ones. "You have intellect, talent, resourcefulness and patriotism. Give all these to the villages, educate the village people in the true sense of the word, through life-giving constructive activity before they take the law into their own hands and launch upon the self-destructive path, which would make their and your last state worse than the first." And again: "You may not understand this today, but one day, perhaps after I am gone, you will. So long our people were like the dumb and the blind. They allowed themselves to be led by the hand. But if you do not look about, a time will come when no-one will listen to your harangues and you will have to address the empty air. For society cannot subsist on gratuitous sermons; deeds, not words will count."

While the Socialist friends agreed that his programme of constructive work would help in the removal of inequalities, they objected to it on the ground that it would not help to raise the "standard of living" of the people. Gandhiji told them that he shared with them the ideal of raising the standard of living but there were certain limits to it. First things must come first. He was, for instance, a lover of art. He would love to have all children get education in dancing and music. But these should become a part and parcel of their life, not be a mere excrescence. He would unhesitatingly ban all art and cultural activities so-called that tended to weaken the moral fibre of the people. Similarly he would discourage harmful luxuries and habit-forming drugs by heavy taxation; he would stop all textile and power-driven flour mills and oil presses. But he would see to it that every village produced all its essential requirements, i.e. food, cloth, milk, vegetables and fruit and that everybody had a sufficiency of these. To encourage self-help he would award prizes and trophies, and exempt from certain taxes the villages that might set an example in that respect.

The artificial living of the industrial era, he went on to observe, had sapped the vitality of men and women. By creating abnormalities unknown before, it had largely nullified the achievements of science. From recollections of his early childhood he drew an idyllic picture of the women in his home Province of Kathiawad, going to fetch water from the river at sunrise and getting the benefit of the young rays of the morning sun, followed by health-giving toil in the fields, and the grinding of corn in their homes to the strains of devotional hymns, which vitalised their body as well as their soul. Work was joy. It was not drudgery to be relieved by leisure and by the thrills provided by the cinema and the theatre. If he were the Prime Minister of India, and had his way, he added laughing, the only theatre he would give them would be the spinning theatre!

"But who prevents you from becoming the Prime Minister of India?" put in one of them. "If you come forward who is going to oppose you?"

Gandhiji : "You will be the first!"

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The Socialists argued that democracy without Socialism had no meaning. While sharing with them the ideal of equal distribution of wealth, Gandhiji went a step further. Neither democracy nor Socialism was realisable except in an environment of unadulterated non-violence. He never concealed the sharp contrast between their method and sense of values and his.

Louis Fischer remarked to Gandhiji once when such a discussion was proceeding : "But you are a Socialist and so are they."

Gandhiji answered : "I am, they are not....My claim will live when their Socialism is dead."

"What do you mean by *your* Socialism?"

"I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their Socialism these will probably have no place.... I want freedom for full expression of my personality. I must be free to build a staircase to Sirius, if I want to....Under the other Socialism there is no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body or individual will."

"Yes, but there are variations. My Socialism in its modified form means that the State does not own everything."

"Does not under your Socialism, the State own your children and educate them in any way it likes?"

"All States do that."

"Then your Socialism is not different from any other."

"You really object to dictatorship."

"But Socialism is dictatorship or else only arm-chair philosophy."

"Socialists want what you want—a free world. Communists don't."

"Communism, as I have understood it, is the natural corollary of Socialism."

"You are right. There was a time when the two could not be distinguished. But today Socialists are very different from Communists."

"You mean to say, you do not want Communism of Stalin's type."

"But Indian Communists want in India Communism of the Stalin type and want to use your name for that purpose."

"They won't succeed."

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The same distrust of pre-conceived theories and generalisations marked Gandhiji's attitude towards Marxism. After an extensive reading of Marxian literature during his last detention at Poona, he remarked: "I think I could have written Marx better than Marx, provided, of course, I had his scholarship which I do not have. He has the knack of making even simple things appear difficult."

On the fly-leaf of *A Handbook of Marxism* he scribbled : "All for each and each for all." "From each according to his capacity

to each according to his need." This to him was the quintessence of the teaching of Marx. Marxism, however, was not the only way or even the best way of achieving this goal.

I tried to get him to give his appraisal of some aspects of the Marxist philosophy. Taking up the role of *advocatus diaboli*, I asked: Were not the economic interpretation of history and the materialistic theory of knowledge outstanding contributions of Marx to the understanding of social phenomena?

He asked me to explain further. I said, "Marx showed us that our ideologies, institutions, and ethical standards, literature, art, customs, even religion, are a product of our economic environment."

He demurred: "I do not agree that our ideologies, ethical standards and values are altogether a product of our material environment without any absolute basis outside it. On the contrary as we are so our environment becomes."

"Is not the Wardha scheme of Basic education based upon the assumption that purposive activity of the hand moulds not only our thinking but our whole personality? Does that not come very near the materialistic theory of knowledge as propounded by Marx?"

"But the Marxist wants to abolish the labouring hand altogether and substitute in its place the machine. He has no use for the hand. Dependence on manual labour, according to Marx, is the symbol and root cause of the destitution and slavery of the worker. It is the function of the machine to emancipate him from this state. I, on the other hand, hold that machine enslaves and only intelligent use of the hand will bring to the worker both freedom and happiness."

"That is true, but..."

Gandhiji continued: "The Marxist regards thought, as it were, 'a secretion of the brain' and the mind 'a reflex of the material environment'. I cannot accept that. Above and beyond both matter and mind is He. If I have an awareness of that living principle within me, no-one can fetter my mind. The body might be destroyed, the spirit will proclaim its freedom. This to me is not a theory; it is a *fact of experience*."

I argued: "The Marxists concede that an individual may transcend his material environment but class behaviour is essentially determined by it. It cannot change unless the economic environment is altered. To transform the capitalist the capitalistic order must be destroyed."

Gandhiji: "What an individual can do, a whole class of people can be induced to do. It is all a question of discovering the right technique. The whole of our non-violent non-cooperation movement, which aims at transforming the British ruling class, is based on this hypothesis. Trusteeship is my answer to the issue of class-conflict."

I passed on to the Marxist doctrine of economic motivation of history. The wars were an inevitable consequence of the institution of private property in the capitalistic system. Gandhiji rejected the one and disagreed with the other. "No, not the economic factor alone. Ultimately it is the Unseen Power that governs the course of events — even in the minds of men who make those events. Supposing

Hitler were to die today, it would alter the whole course of current history. Similarly, supposing all capitalists were wiped out as a result of an earthquake or some other natural cataclysm, the history of class-war would then be changed in a way least dreamt of by the exponents of economic interpretation of history. Would not the history of the present war have been different if instead of Chamberlain a more dynamic figure had been the Prime Minister of England? Or, if Chamberlain had not shown lack of political courage at the last moment?"

"The Marxists say," I interjected, "that to abolish war we have but to abolish the institution of private property. You have also taught that property is incompatible with the non-violent way of life."

Gandhiji: "This is only partly true. Was not Helen of Troy the cause of the Trojan war? Were the wars of the Rajputs related to the institution of private property? No. To banish war we have to do more. We have to eradicate possessiveness and greed and lust and egotism from our own hearts. We have to carry war within ourselves to banish it from society."

I altered my line of argument. "The remedies prescribed by Marx are of course wrong but can we not make use of his diagnosis of the malaise that affects our society for a proper understanding of the problem and devising right remedies for the same? Take, for instance, his views on gradualism; futility of parliamentary action alone for effecting radical changes in society; necessity of direct action; in a sense even his theory of minority dictatorship, odious though it is. You also have taught that small reform kills revolution and non-cooperation is the only remedy when a system, in the sum, is evil and finally, that appeal to reason is not enough unless it is backed by an effective sanction. And has not every reformer in a way necessarily to be a dictator and every reformist institution a dictatorship? Inasmuch as a reformer has to lead, he has to go ahead of the majority; he cannot afford to be led by the majority. How can he submit to majority rule? My point is that Marx knew of only one effective sanction, viz. of violence — force. If only he had been aware of the sanction of non-violence or Satyagraha and its potency, he might have adopted it in place of violence. Even in our own time industry is being changed over from steam to oil and electricity."

Gandhiji: "I have also heard it said that often it is more economical to dispose of the old plant than to try to adapt it from one kind of motive power to another. In the present case, the difference between violence and non-violence is fundamental. It cuts at the very root of the Marxist theory. If you alter the foundation the whole superstructure will have to be changed."

"I agree. But you have derived non-violence from the Gita. I find a powerful support in the Marxist analysis for your method of non-violent non-cooperation."

Gandhiji: "My interpretation of the Gita is rejected by those who do not believe in Ahimsa and those who are believers in Ahimsa do not need it. Your interpretation will be dubbed un-Marxist by convinced Marxists. It will not appeal to them."

"My quarrel with the Marxists is that even if the paradise of material satisfactions, which they envisage as their final goal, were realised on earth, it would not bring mankind either contentment or peace. But I was wondering whether we cannot take the best out of Marxism and turn it to account for the realisation of our social aims."

After some further discussion Gandhiji said: "You can advance this as your own original thesis on Marx. It might provide a rationale for the practice of Satyagraha to those who lack the spiritual background." But I could not dislodge him from his position that what was good in Marxism was not original or exclusive to it, and what was exclusive to it was not necessarily good. After a while he added: "What has made the teaching of Marx dynamic is that he regarded mankind as a whole and transcending class divisions identified himself with the cause of the poor oppressed toilers of the world. But in that he is not alone. Others besides him have done the same."

He would not concede that Marx had founded an absolute science of society or discovered any laws of social dynamics which *apriori* have an objective validity. The Marxian system was just an attempt to forge a tool for the achievement of a certain goal which Marx held to be desirable.

Finally he said: "We may criticise Marx but that he was a great man who can deny? His analysis of social ills or the cures he prescribed for them may or may not be correct. I do not accept his economic theories but this much I know that the poor are being ground down. Something has got to be done for it. Marx set about to do that in his own way. He had acumen, scholarship, genius."

* * *

William Morris, who worked his way to Socialism through art, has pithily described how mankind would have no use for mere material comforts and leisure if the new order did not at the same time ensure freedom, inner peace, joy of self-expression and harmony to the individual. He regarded body-labour as an aid to the expression of art instead of being an antithesis of art and he abhorred the production of material goods at the cost of dehumanising labour. He also had the insight to see how in the pursuit of plenty through a State-owned, centralised system of production, the peace and liberty of mankind might be endangered.

It is necessary to point out [wrote Morris] that there are some Socialists who do not think that the problem of the organisation of life and necessary labour can be dealt with by a huge national centralisation, working by a kind of magic for which no-one feels himself responsible; that on the contrary it will be necessary for the unit of administration to be small enough for every citizen to feel himself responsible for its details and be interested in them; that individual men cannot shuffle off the business of life on the shoulders of an abstraction called the State, but must deal with it in conscious association with each other; that variety of life is as much an aim of true Communism as equality of condition, and that nothing but an union of these two will bring about real freedom; that modern nationalities

are mere artificial devices for the commercial war that we seek to put an end to, and will disappear with it; and finally, that art, using that word in its wider and due signification, is not a mere adjunct of life which free and happy men can do without, but the necessary expression and indispensable instrument of human happiness.

This could very well serve as an authentic description of Gandhiji's own views on Socialism though he had never read *The Earthly Paradise*. The resemblance goes deeper. Morris shared with Gandhiji an abhorrence of war and all violence as a means of achieving Socialism. In fact he clearly hinted that such an attempt is bound to prove self-defeating through the inherrent contradiction between the end and the means. "I have a religious hatred to all war and violence," he wrote and added that he had made it his duty "to sow the seed for the goodwill and justice that may make it possible for the next revolution which will be a social one, to work itself out without violence being an essential part of it."

Gandhiji's discussion with the Socialists led to a demand on their part that Gandhiji should give a definitive summing up of his final views on Socialism, suited to Indian conditions and the way it could be realised. This he did in two articles in *Harijan* in July, 1947:

Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware in Socialism all the members of society are equal — none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is Socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion, there is no duality in Socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over, there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence.... In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state, we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to Socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no Socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no-one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This Socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an

impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalled by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalise the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and *vice versa*. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way — the spelling of words will be different; the value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. *Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.* (Italics mine).

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted Socialists will be able to establish a Socialistic society in India and the world.

After describing the nature of the goal and the qualifications that the instruments must possess to reach it, he went on to describe the means. "Truth and Ahimsa must incarnate in Socialism. In order that they can do so, the votary must have a living faith in God." Mere mechanical adherence to Truth and Ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment :

Hence have I said that truth is God. This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force, denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. The Socialism of such takes them nowhere, not to say of the society in which they live.

That raises the double poser : "Are there not Socialists who are believers in God? And if there be any such, why has Socialism not been realised? Conversely, many godly persons have lived before now; why have they not succeeded in founding a Socialist State?"

Gandhiji admits that it is difficult completely to silence these doubts. But he ventures the explanation that perhaps it has never occurred to a believing Socialist that there is any connection between his Socialism and belief in God. Conversely, "it is equally safe to say that godly men as a rule never commended Socialism to the masses. Have not superstitions flourished in the world in spite of godly men?"

Confronted with a current cliché that Socialism can succeed only in a society of angels and when such a society arrives, there will be no need for Socialism left, William Morris replied : "I do not believe in the world being saved by any system — only assert the necessity of attacking systems grown corrupt."

William Morris had not worked out how this could be done without resorting to methods that are self-defeating. Gandhiji takes up the problem at this point and provides the answer :

The answer lies in the implicit connection between truth which is God and Satyagraha — the master key to all human

problems. The laws of Satyagraha are still being discovered. When they are fully discovered, full Socialism will no longer be an utopia but a firm reality.

The fact is that it has already been a matter of strenuous research to know this great Force and its hidden possibilities. My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of Satyagraha. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of Satyagraha have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of Satyagraha. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

— (From *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pages 132-142.)

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